A Matter of Trust

By: Lilac Moon

ROTS AU. Padme discovers a conspiracy behind Shmi Skywalker's death. Can she save Ani from the dark side? Chapter 17 is up! The shroud of the dark side continues to fall, but love is a ray of light in it's darkness. AnakinPadme

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Dark Side Conspiracy

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AN: This is my first Star Wars fic, so please be kind. This begins just before ROTS, therefore, this will be a ROTS AU. Enjoy and let me know what you think!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 1: Dark Side Conspiracy

Padme rubbed her eyes from exhaustion. She glanced up at the chrono on the wall and realized that she had worked through dinner. But one did that when all they had to go home to was an empty apartment. She picked up the budget datapad and decided to read through a few more files, before heading home. She was beginning to get hungry. She smiled, and put a hand to her growing stomach, as she felt a kick. The baby was getting hungry as well. She couldn't wait to tell Ani about their baby. She knew he would be so happy. She was too, but scared as to what it would mean for them at the same time. As she was scrolling through the files, she came across an encrypted once, in which she had never seen before. Her curiosity piqued, as she tried to break into it. Unfortunately, it was too well encrypted.

'If only Artoo were here,' she thought to herself. Suddenly, she remembered the encryption decoder that Artoo had left with her. If anything besides Artoo could crack into the file, it would be that. She packed up the datapad and grabbed her things, before leaving for her apartment. She had been very suspicious of Palpatine, as of late, and if this could tell her anything about his dealings, it might bring the war closer to an end and bring Anakin back home to her.

Padme entered her apartment and tossed her things off to the side.

"Welcome home Miss Padme," 3PO greeted.

"Thank you 3PO. Can you please retrieve that decoder that Artoo left for me?" Padme requested.

"Of course Miss Padme, right away," 3PO chimed in response.

"Good evening milady," Dorme greeted. Padme smiled at her most trusted friend. She and Captain Typho had been so good to her and were the only ones that knew of her secret marriage to Anakin.

"Hello Dorme," Padme replied. In her bedroom, Dorme helped her out of her heavy senatorial robes, which these days, were even heavier in order to hide her pregnancy. She was already showing quite a bit at 5 months due to her petite frame. It was getting harder and harder to hide.

"Padme, you seem stressed. You need to relax and not only for yourself, but for the baby as well," Dorme told her. Padme sighed.

"I know, I'm just frustrated. Peace talks are going no where and the Chancellor has taken no steps to end this war. And my husband is out there in the middle of it. I want him home," Padme said, as the last part came out choked, as she desperately tried to hold the tears back.

"I'm sorry, I just miss him so much," Padme apologized, as she slipped into a sky blue nightgown.

"You have nothing to be sorry about milady. I can't even imagine how hard this is for you, I don't know how you do it sometimes," Dorme replied.

"Me either," Padme replied quietly. Padme straightened, remembering the file she wanted so desperately to reveal.

"I'll be fine Dorme, you can go for the night," Padme replied.

"Are you sure?" she asked, with much concern.

"I'm positive," Padme replied. Dorme nodded and put on her cloak, before Padme saw her out.

Padme opened the datapad and inserted the chip Artoo had left for her. While the decoder went to work, Padme went to the kitchen for a glass of Shuura juice and something to eat. She returned sometime later and was pleasantly surprised to see that the decoder had done its job. She began scrolling through the various transactions and saw a few questionable things here and there. She frowned when she saw that no names were revealed on any of the transactions, only that they had been made by someone in the senate. She shook her head, thinking that she could definitely find better places for these credits to be spent. Suddenly, a name on one caught her attention. She quickly opened the transaction for a better look and what she saw caused her to gasp in horror. A very large sum of credits had been paid to an unnamed bounty hunter for the successful abduction and disposal of…Shmi Skywalker. She put a hand over her mouth in abject horror, as tears threatened to fall.

"This can't be right…Shmi wasn't kidnaped by a bounty hunter," Padme said. Her mind was reeling still when she remembered a conversation that had taken place at the Lars home after Ani had gone after his mother.

Flashback:

" *I just don't understand why they would take her. She was no threat to them and no where near their territory," Cliegg Lars said in frustration. That peaked her interest.*

" *Forgive me, but I've heard that the Tuscan's are ruthless killers. Why does it surprise you that they took her?" Padme asked respectfully.*

" *You're right, the Tuscan's are ruthless murderers, but usually here on the moisture farms and near the cities, you're safe from them.*

Tuscan's usually only attack people who are unfortunate enough to wander out into the Jundland Wastes and beyond. That's their territory and it is unusual for them to come in this far," Owen explained.

Padme had thought it was very strange that Shmi had been kidnaped by Tuscans after that conversation. But Cliegg and Owen had told her about the Tuscan tracks out by the vaporators, where she had last been. Since she did not know enough about the creatures at the time, she dismissed the whole incident as a very unfortunate tragedy.

But now…bounty hunters. They were very good at making sure to cover their tracks. Had one actually kidnaped Shmi and left her near that Tuscan village? But why? Who in the senate would want to hurt her and…Anakin! Who would want to hurt her Ani like that? She remembered his confession to her. He had slaughtered all those creatures in anger over his mother's death. An incredible anger and hate had taken a hold of him. It made him do something that her Anakin just wouldn't do had he been in control. She had heard Obi-Wan speak of the dangers of emotions like anger and hate for a Jedi. He said that they could and often did lead to the dark side.

She covered her face with her hands, as she lightly sobbed. Could someone really be trying to turn Ani to the dark side. If that were actually so, then that would mean…that the Sith Lord was somewhere in the senate. The true horror of that was too much for her, as she ran to the refresher to empty to contents of her stomach.

Padme finished rinsing her mouth and brushing her teeth. She knew that she had to take great care in who she revealed this information to. The only senators that she trusted implicitly were Bail Organa and Mon Mothma. She sat down on the couch and buried her face in her hands. Could she trust the Chancellor? He had always been very fond of Anakin and he would want to know if someone was trying to hurt him.

But...something in her gut told her not to tell him. Something told her to keep Anakin as far away for the Chancellor as possible, though she didn't really know why she felt that way. At one time, Palpatine was her mentor and most trusted advisor. When had things changed so drastically? She guessed that the change over the last thirteen years had been so subtle that she hadn't really noticed it. She felt a little kick in her stomach and smiled. It was getting late and there really was nothing more she could do tonight. She would go to bed and in the morning, she would pay a surprise visit to the dear chancellor and get a feel for how much he knew.

She pulled back the covers and climbed into bed. She shivered slightly and pulled the blankets up around her. She sighed sadly, as she put a hand on Anakin's empty side of the bed. It had been five long months since she had seen him last, but she would never forget that magical night.

Flashback :

Anakin wrapped his arms around her slim waist from behind, as they stood together on the veranda. He had just returned from a meeting with the Jedi Council. As he feared, his two weeks of leave were ending and he was leaving in the morning. Sensing his sadness, Padme turned in his embrace and wrapped her arms around his neck.

" *When do you leave?" she asked.*

" *Tomorrow morning," he replied sadly. She nodded numbly and laid her head against his chest.*

" *I don't know how much longer I can be away from you like this," he said, as he kissed her forehead.*

" *I know, I hate this war too," she replied.*

" *I'd leave the Jedi if you asked me to," he said. I looked up at him.*

" *I know you would, but I can't let you do that. Too many people need you. You were meant to be a Jedi and they need you just as much as I do," she replied. Anakin scoffed.*

" *The Jedi don't trust me, they never have. From my first day in the temple, I've always been looked at like an outsider. The other padawans were always afraid of me and the knights and masters were leery and skeptical of me. You're what I need, what I've always needed," he replied.*

" *I know, you're all I need too. And once this war is over, we can both retire and finally raise a family. But I have to make sure that I do everything I can to end this war. I want to raise any children that we have in a peaceful galaxy, not one torn by war," she said passionately. Anakin caressed her cheek.*

" *You're right, we need to end this war first," he replied.*

" *And then, we'll move back to Naboo and make beautiful babies," she said with a smile, as she gave him a tender kiss on the lips.*

" *You just have to promise me that you'll be careful out there and that you'll come back to me," she pleaded with him.*

" *Nothing could ever keep me from coming back to you, angel," he replied, as he swept her into a searing kiss. She felt her knees go weak, as her husband trailed soft kisses down her neck.*

" *We should make use of the time we have left together," he said, giving her that trademark sexy half smile she loved so much. She smiled and kissed him again, as he lifted her into his arms and carried her to their bedroom.*

End Flashback

She smiled at the memory of how they had made love well into the early hours of the morning. And when she awoke, he was gone, on his way to fight in the outer rim sieges with Obi-Wan. Finally, she

managed to drift off to sleep with thoughts of her husband fresh in her mind.

The next morning, Senator Padme Amidala strode confidently toward the office of Supreme Chancellor Palpatine. Suddenly, she was meant with an astonishing sight. The chancellor's guards were laying haphazardly on the floor. She heard voices coming from the chancellor's office and wasted no time in barging her way in...

"You have become incompetent Chancellor. My master and I have promised to deliver you to the Separatist leaders," Count Dooku said, as he secured the Chancellor's hands in the shackles. Dooku looked up, as he sensed another presence. Senator Amidala entered the office, scowling at Dooku.

"Senator Amidala...this is quite a surprise. I'm afraid that you've chose a most unfortunate time to see the chancellor. No matter though, my master may find some use for you," Dooku smiled evilly. Using the Force, Dooku ceased her movements so he could bind her hands. As much as she struggled, she could not break his force grip. She tried hard to keep calm, but her composure was fading fast.

' *Oh Ani, I'm so sorry,'* she said to herself. Dooku brought his mouth to her ear.

"Don't worry dear senator, you'll be seeing your *Ani* soon enough. My master and I have foreseen it," Dooku told her. Padme's eyes widened in horror. She had been right! The Sith were after Anakin! She gritted her teeth in determination. They couldn't have him, not if she had anything to say about it...

Count Dooku led his two prisoners to his transport, which would soon meet up with General Grevious' flagship.

' *Oh Ani, I'm so sorry,'*

Jedi Knight Anakin Skywalker jolted awake in his quarters aboard the Republic cruiser he was currently assigned to.

"Padme..." he whispered. He didn't know how, but he knew that something was seriously wrong. He threw back the blankets, as he heard his comlink chirp.

"Skywalker here," he answered.

"Anakin, I'm sorry to wake you, but you need to come to the bridge. We have received an urgent message from the council," Obi-Wan Kenobi said.

"I'll be right there master," Anakin answered, as he threw on his clothes and headed for the bridge.

A hologram appeared before them in the forms of Jedi Masters Yoda and Mace Windu.

"Greetings Master Kenobi and Knight Skywalker," Yoda began.

"Hello masters," Obi-Wan greeted, as he and Anakin bowed respectfully.

"What is the urgency masters?" Anakin asked.

"We have very distressing news. Chancellor Palpatine, along with Senator Amidala, have been kidnaped by Count Dooku," Mace revealed. Anakin felt his heart tighten in his chest. He immediately walled up his emotions and managed to remain stoic.

"Taken to General Grevious' flagship the *Imperial Hand* they have been. The council's decision it is to send you both on this rescue mission," Master Yoda told them.

"Very well masters, Anakin and I will leave immediately," Obi-Wan replied.

"May the force be with you both," Mace told them.

"May the force be with you as well masters," Obi-Wan replied, as their transmission blinked out. He turned to Anakin, only to find that the young knight was already heading for hanger bay. He could faintly feel the emotional torrent going on inside of Anakin, despite his efforts to conceal it. He sighed heavily and followed his former apprentice. He truly hoped that the suspicions he had about Anakin and the senator were wrong. Coruscant was a 14-hour flight from where they were and it was time he and his former padawan had a long talk...

The Truth

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AN: Here's chapter 2! I want to thank everyone who left such nice reviews, they really give me inspiration to write. This chapter will begin with first person POV's, but then it will switch back to third person.

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 2: The Truth

Obi-Wan's POV

We've been in hyperspace now for 12 hours. I can still feel Anakin's troubled emotions through the Force. He has been attempting to meditate and rest, but I don't believe he's been very successful. He knows that soon we will be having a discussion and that I expect nothing but the truth. For the last 12 hours, his thoughts have been on Senator Amidala and I have respected his privacy, as to not delve any deeper into our master/padawan bond than that. I sense that Anakin is now waiting for me to open the comm channel.

Anakin's POV

Meditation and sleep seem impossible. I can't stop worrying about Padme. What does Dooku want with her? If he harms her, I swear I'll kill him with my bare hands! I know my master can sense my anger, but I cannot help it. My wife is being held hostage by a Sith. I feel guilty about keeping our secret from Obi-Wan, as I know he will feel betrayed. In a lot of ways, I'm going to be relieved to tell my master the truth. I know I'll probably be expelled, but at least we won't have to hide anymore. I just hope this doesn't ruin Padme's career completely. A senator is not forbidden to marry, but I'm not sure how

the senate will react to her being married to a former Jedi. I sighed, as I saw the comm light come on. I switched it on and my master's face appeared on the screen.

"I think we have a lot to talk about Anakin," Obi-Wan began.

"Yes master," Anakin replied, as Obi-Wan crossed his arms over his chest. Anakin suppressed the urge to roll his eyes, knowing that his master was just waiting to lecture him on the Jedi code.

"All right master, what do you want to know?" Anakin replied, beating around the question.

"How about the truth?" Obi-Wan retorted.

"Fine. I love her master, it's as plain and simple as that," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan sighed.

"Anakin, I thought you'd be over this infatuation by now," Obi-Wan chided. Anakin's lips curled into a disgusted frown.

"It's not infatuation, we love each other," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan sighed again.

"Anakin, I know this is hard, especially at your age. The Jedi don't expect us to be celibate, though it is encouraged. But attachments cannot be formed," Obi-Wan stated. Anakin couldn't help but snort in disgust. He shook his head in disbelief.

"In other words, it's okay if I leave credits on the bedside table. It's okay to satisfy the physical need, but it's not okay to build a loving relationship like Padme and I have! What kind of twisted morals are those! I would never dishonor Padme like that! My *mother* taught me better than that. The truth is, we're husband and wife and we love each other," Anakin confessed passionately.

' *Married!'* Obi-Wan screamed to himself.

"Yes master, we're married. The Jedi say it's wrong, but our hearts say it's right!" Anakin added. Obi-Wan had winced at the mention of Anakin's mother. She had taught him many things that the Jedi had tried to reverse. Perhaps Anakin was too old to be trained...

"Anakin, do you realize what the council will do when they find out?" Obi-Wan questioned.

"They can expel me if they wish, but I will not leave her. That's not even an option," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan threw up his hands in defeat.

"How long have you been married?" Obi-Wan ventured.

"Since Geonosis," Anakin answered.

" *Three years!"* Obi-Wan mentally screamed again.

"I'm sorry I've disappointed you master, I never wanted that. But nothing can ever change the fact that I love her.

"You married her? What were *you* thinking! What was *she* thinking!" Obi-Wan asked.

"We were thinking that we loved each other and we wanted to be together, regardless of what that meant. Believe me, we tried to push our feelings aside, but we found out that we just couldn't fight it. To do so would have made us miserable. I know that we have been dishonest and we both hate that fact, but we felt that we could not lie to our hearts. Love is such an amazing thing Obi-Wan, I do not understand and will never understand why it is forbidden," Anakin finished.

"It is forbidden, because it can lead you to the dark side! Did you both think that you could really hide this secret forever?" Obi-Wan questioned.

"No, we've talked about revealing our secret after the war is over. Both Padme and I want to have a family someday. We will leave or careers behind if we have to," Anakin replied.

"So you're willing to throw all your training away for something that you don't even know will last. Relationships don't last forever Anakin," Obi-Wan reasoned.

"Padme and I are forever master, you don't have to doubt that. I love being a Jedi, but I love Padme more. If I am made to choose, I will choose her," Anakin replied.

"Anakin, this is exactly why attachment is forbidden! So a Jedi does not have to make these rash choices!" Obi-Wan argued.

"Then why not let me be a Jedi and a husband! I've already been doing it for three years! She's what keeps me going! She's why I fight so hard!" Anakin yelled back. Obi-Wan resolved himself of the situation. Reaching into the force, he calmed his nerves.

"We need to prepare to come out of hyperspace. I suggest you calm yourself for the upcoming battle as well," Obi-Wan suggested, as their comm screens went dark.

"Yes master," Anakin replied, as he too reached into the force and sought to calm his nerves as well.

As Anakin prepared to disengage he hyper drive on his star fighter, he pondered the discussion he and Obi-Wan just had. Mentioning his mother brought up a lot of memories, both good and bad. When she died in his arms, he had lost control. He had let the dark feelings take over him, causing him to do something he regretted. At first, he relished the powerful feeling. But after he had enacted revenge, it left him with an awful feeling of wrongness and injustice. He had killed for vengeance and allowed himself to be engulfed by the dark side. And that frightened him. Padme was the reason that he was still here. She had pulled him out of the cloud of darkness with her

warmth and love. She hadn't judged him, she had comforted him. He was always astonished at how the darkness around him receded when he was in her presence. She was his saving grace, truly his angel. And now, nothing would stop him from saving her from the hands of the Sith...

"Bring us out of hyperspace Artoo," Anakin ordered. Artoo complied, and he and Obi-Wan appeared over Coruscant. In the distance, a fierce battle between the republic and the separatists waged heavily. The two Jedi star fighters wasted no time in sweeping in and engaging in the fight.

"Lock onto them Artoo," Anakin ordered, as he opened the comm channel.

"Master, General Grevious' ship is directly ahead. The one crawling with vulture droids," Anakin said.

"Oh I see it. Oh, this is going to be easy," Obi-Wan said, sarcasm dripping from his voice. Then, Obi-Wan ordered the clone troops to move into attack position. They complied, moving in behind him. Anakin smirked.

"This is where the fun begins," he said, as the vulture droids headed directly toward them.

"Let them pass between us," Obi-Wan ordered. Anakin became very concerned as several clone troops were killed.

"I'm going to help them," Anakin announced.

"No, no they are doing they're job so we can do ours," Obi-wan replied. Anakin complied, as the droids then released missiles.

"Missiles! Pull up!" Anakin called.

"They over shot us," Obi-Wan informed.

"They're coming around," Anakin announced. Arfour beeped in, taking the controls.

"No, no Arfour, nothing too fancy!" Obi-Wan grimaced, as his ship lurched.

"Surge all power units, stand by, reverse thrusters!" Anakin ordered. Anakin grinned, as his ship began to spiral, causing the missiles to mimic the behavior. The missiles collided and exploded. Anakin chuckled, as he heard Artoo's response.

"We got 'em Artoo," Anakin smiled. Obi-Wan was becoming frustrated, as he took manual control of the ship. He was still trying to shake the missiles.

"Flying is for droids," Obi-Wan complained. The older Jedi was hit and a number of droids latched onto his ship.

"Buzz droids!" Anakin exclaimed. Obi-Wan looked on, worried, as the buzz droids began tearing up the ship.

"Arfour, be careful..." Obi-Wan stopped, as he saw one droid tear Arfour's dome off.

"Oh dear," Obi-Wan lamented. The droids continued to tear holes in his ship.

"They're shutting down all the controls!" Obi-Wan called.

"Move to the right, so I can get a clear shot!" Anakin responded.

"The mission. Get to the command ship!" Obi-Wan ordered. But Anakin's resolve only hardened, as he plunged forward, taking pot shots at the droids. Unfortunately, he accidentally shot off one of the wings.

"What in the name of!" Obi-Wan yelled, as his ship lurched hard.

"Hold your fire, you're not helping!" Obi-Wan yelled.

"I agree, bad idea," Anakin replied.

"I can't see a thing," Obi-Wan complained, as his windows were fogged over by the droids.

"Move to the right," Anakin said, as he tried to bump the droids off with the wing of the ship.

"Hold on Anakin! You're going to get us both killed! Get out of here, there's nothing you can do," Obi-Wan yelled at him.

"I'm not leaving without you master," Anakin called back. Anakin knocked out more droids, but one made it onto Anakin's ship, immediately heading for Artoo.

"Get him Artoo!" Anakin told his faithful droid. Artoo zapped at it.

"Watch out," Anakin instructed.

"Artoo, hit the buzz droid, center eye!" Obi-Wan instructed. Artoo did so, successfully destroying the droid. It slipped harmlessly off the hull of Anakin's ship.

"Yeah, you got 'em!" Anakin said.

"The general's command ship is dead ahead," Anakin stated.

"Well, have you noticed that the shields are still up!" Obi-Wan yelled.

"Sorry master," Anakin apologized, as he circled around. He shot laser blasts at the control panel, deactivating the shields.

"Oh I have a bad feeling about this!" Obi-Wan called, as the metal sealing doors began to slide shut. The two Jedi star fighters made it inside just in time. Upon landing, Obi-Wan flipped out, lightsaber activated and began taking out droids. Anakin quickly joined him and the two successfully took out the droids.

"Artoo, locate the chancellor," Obi-Wan ordered. Artoo beeped and Anakin smiled.

"And Padme too," Anakin answered. Artoo brought up a hologram design of the ship.

"The chancellors signal is coming from up on the observational platform at the top of this spire," Obi-Wan pointed.

"Artoo, what about Padme?" Anakin asked. Obi-Wan gave him a withering glance.

"Spare me the lecture master," Anakin responded to his master's reprimanding look.

"Chancellor Palpatine must be our first priority," Obi-Wan reasoned. Artoo beeped, as he located her.

"Padme is and always will be *my* first priority. Besides, she's in the detention block, which is on the way up," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan sighed.

"Blasted stubbornness," he muttered.

"I sense Count Dooku," Anakin mentioned.

"And I sense a trap," Obi-Wan replied.

"Next move?" Anakin smirked. Obi-Wan smirked back.

"Spring the trap," Obi-Wan smiled. Artoo chirped at them.

"Artoo, go back. I need you to stay with the ship," Anakin ordered.

"Here, take this," Obi-Wan said, tossing the comlink to him.

"Wait for orders," Obi-Wan said. As Anakin and Obi-Wan waited for the turbo lift, destroyers approached. Anakin and Obi-Wan called forth their lightsabers. The two Jedi deflected their blasts and

entered the turbo lift. The turbo lift happened to be filled with battle droids.

"Drop your weapons. I said drop 'em," the droid said mechanically. The two Jedi glanced at each other, before proceeding to chop the droids to pieces. Suddenly, the turbo lift stopped.

"Did you press the stop button?" Obi-Wan asked.

"No, did you?" Anakin responded.

"No," Obi-Wan answered.

"Well, there's more than one way out," Anakin said, as he ignited his saber and cut a hold in the top.

"We don't want to get out, we want to get moving. Artoo, activate elevator 31174," Obi-Wan ordered. Back in the docking bay, Artoo slipped farther into the corner and tried to muffle the comlink, hoping those other search droids would ignore him.

When Anakin finished cutting the hole in the top, he forced jumped out and onto the top of the lift.

"Always on the move," Obi-Wan quipped. Suddenly, the turbo lift jolted and began descending rapidly. Anakin jumped and held onto the side of the platform tightly, feet dangling.

"Artoo! Stop! Stop, we need to be going up!" Obi-Wan called. Anakin looked down, but suddenly heard a voice above him.

"Hands up Jedi!" the droid said, pointing it's blaster at him. Artoo positioned himself at the controls and locked in, reversing the course of the turbo lift. As the turbo lift ascended, Anakin flipped and jumped back onto the lift and dropped through the opening he had made. He landed with a thump, causing Obi-Wan to ignite his saber. He quickly extinguished it, realizing who it was.

"There you are," Obi-Wan said.

"What was that all about?" Anakin asked.

"Well Artoo..." Obi-Wan started, but Anakin cut him off.

"No loose wire jokes," Anakin said.

"Did I say anything?" Obi-Wan replied.

"He's trying," Anakin insisted.

"I didn't say anything," Obi-Wan insisted.

As they exited the turbo lift and rounded the corner, they ran into Grevious. There, along with his droid commanders, were his captives. Jedi Master Shaak Ti and Senator Padme Amidala.

"Shaak Ti," Obi-Wan said.

"Senator Amidala," Anakin said, trying to keep his composure, which was beyond difficult, as he looked into her frightened brown eyes.

"I'm sorry master Kenobi, I failed," Shaak Ti said.

"Ah, General Kenobi, we've been waiting for you," Grevious rasped, as he bent down behind Shaak Ti. He ignited his saber, plunging it through her chest. Padme screamed, as she witnessed the brutal, heartless murder take place before her eyes.

"Stinking Jedi," Grevious laughed, as she fell to the floor in a heap, dead. Obi-Wan and Anakin ignited their sabers, as Grevious grabbed Padme's arm. Droids ascended upon them and they extinguished their sabers.

"That was a bad..." Anakin started, his stormy blue eyes locking on Padme.

"Mistake," Obi-Wan finished. Grevious coughed, clutching Padme's arm tighter.

"A tragic ending for a gallant warrior. I would kill the senator too, but Nute Gunray has expressed an interest in carrying out her demise," Grevious rasped. Obi-Wan watched Anakin, as he brushed his fingers along the side of his face.

"Rescue Anakin, not mayhem," Obi-Wan answered.

"I look forward to adding your lightsabers to my collection," Grevious rasped, releasing his hold on Padme's arm. Exactly what Anakin was waiting for. Anakin brushed his fingers over his lips.

"No, no, no," Obi-Wan answered. Anakin gave him a withering glance.

"This is not a good time to argue master," Anakin replied.

"Might I recommend?" Obi-Wan asked, as he tugged at his mustache. Anakin scoffed.

"There's far too many of them for that," Anakin disagreed. Anakin brushed his fingers across his eyebrow and looked down.

"Oh yes," Obi-Wan answered. Reaching deeply into the force, Anakin pulled Padme to him, catching her in his arms. Obi-Wan and Anakin ignited their sabers and cut a hole in the floor underneath their feet. The three fell through to the deck below and into the fuel tank.

"The fuel tank is rupturing. Hurry, seal off the bulkhead!" Grevious ordered his droids.

"We're safe for the time being," Anakin said, clutching Padme's hand tightly.

"You're idea of safe is not the same as mine," Obi-Wan replied. Anakin stopped for a moment, taking Padme's hands in his own.

"Are you all right?" he asked. She glanced ahead at Obi-Wan. Anakin smiled slightly.

"It's okay...he knows," Anakin informed her. That's all he had to say, as she threw her arms around his neck.

"I am now," she replied. Anakin held her trembling form for a moment, while kissing her tenderly. They broke the brief embrace and caught up to Obi-Wan. As they made their way deeper, Anakin found an opening.

"Okay angel, climb in," Anakin said, helping her through it, knowing that her senatorial gown restricted a lot of movement. Anakin and Obi-Wan followed her through. Obi-Wan began to climb up the rivets in the wall, while Anakin took out his ascension cable from his utility belt. He threw it up and it attached itself to the wall. Padme wrapped her arms around his neck, as he wrapped one arm around her waist. Together, they began to climb up. Obi-Wan accessed the opening of a cylindrical shaft. Anakin hoisted Padme through and the two Jedi followed suit, as they crawled through the shaft. Padme pressed a button on the control panel, which opened the other end of the shaft, allowing them to crawl through to the deck. They had arrived at the observation platform at the top spire...

Confrontation with Dooku

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars or any of it's characters or likenesses. They all belong to LFL.

AN: Here's chapter 3! Thanks for all your great reviews, I really appreciate all the kind words.

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 3: Confrontation with Dooku

The two Jedi and the Senator entered the observation room at the top spire. Chancellor Palpatine sat in a chair in the center of the room. The group approached him.

"Chancellor," Obi-Wan bowed.

"Are you okay?" Anakin asked.

"Count Dooku," was all the chancellor said. Count Dooku, also known as Darth Tyrannus, entered and flipped down over the railing. He drew his saber from his belt, as he approached them.

"This time, we will do it together," Obi-Wan instructed.

"I was about to say to that," Anakin replied. He gently motioned for Padme to stay behind him and near the Chancellor, before taking his place at Obi-Wan's side.

"You're no match for him. He's a Sith Lord," Palpatine discouraged.

"Chancellor Palpatine, Sith lords are our speciality," Obi-Wan smiled, as he and Anakin removed their cloaks.

"Be careful," Padme called. Anakin gave her a quick smile.

"Your swords please, we don't want to make a mess of things in front of the Chancellor and the good senator," Dooku said. Obi-Wan ignited his saber and crouched into a ready stance. Anakin was silent, as he ignited his own and mirrored his master's stance. The two highly skilled Jedi charged at Dooku, sabers crashing together in a brilliant array of sparks. They stopped for a moment, as their sabers hummed and crackled on contact.

"I've been looking forward to this," Dooku said.

"My powers have doubled since we last met Count," Anakin replied.

"Good. Twice the pride, double the fall," Dooku shot back. They engaged each other again, while Padme and the Chancellor looked on. Dooku force pushed Obi-Wan away and took Anakin one on one. Obi-Wan quickly regained ground and joined the fight again. Dooku force pushed Anakin into the wall, while choking Obi-Wan and lifting him into the air. He hurled the older knight across the room and he hit the floor hard. Dooku wasn't finished with him, as he willed a metal platform to fall on top of him. Padme brought her hands to mouth and yelped, as she watched her friend be hurt. She watched Anakin intently, as he leapt at Dooku, kicking him over the railing. Anakin hopped over after the aging Sith. Their sabers clashed in a dead lock with the familiar hums and crackling pops.

"I sense great fear in you Skywalker," Dooku said.

"You have hate. You have anger. But you don't use them," Dooku taunted, as they pulled their sabers out of the dead lock. Anakin took a breath and brought his saber over his head, before bringing it down fiercely on Dooku, who met it with his own saber. Their sabers continued to clash, before meeting in struggle again. Anakin brought his saber around and under, severing Dooku's hands from his wrists. Anakin caught Dooku's saber, as Dooku dropped to his knees. Anakin crossed the sabers and held them at Dooku's neck.

"Good, good Anakin, kill him. Kill him now," Palpatine ordered. Padme's eyes widened in shock. Dooku eyed Palpatine, shock and

betrayal blazing in his eyes and marring his features.

"I shouldn't," Anakin struggled.

"No Anakin! He must stand trial!" Padme called. Palpatine steeled an icy glare on her.

"Normally, I would agree milady. But Count Dooku is just too dangerous to be kept alive. With him dead, surely we will be able to end this war," Palpatine said.

"I see your point Chancellor. But I believe that we can use Dooku to negotiate with the separatists and end this war without further bloodshed. We have one of their leaders, who has invaluable information. Once we have Grevious, they will be forced to negotiate," Padme argued.

"Senator Amidala is right," Anakin agreed, as he extinguished the lightsabers. He placed a pair of force-restraining cuffs around Dooku's forearms, since he no longer had any hands.

"Forgive me milady, perhaps you are correct. I hope you'll both forgive my brief error in judgement. This whole ordeal has been rather trying," Palpatine said, hoping to play on their sympathies.

"We understand your excellency," Anakin replied.

"Yes, I have longed to see Dooku brought to justice after all he has done. I understand your feelings Chancellor," Padme answered. With Dooku secure, Anakin and Padme headed over to check on Obi-Wan. Anakin carefully pulled him out from underneath the platform and knelt down beside him.

"Is he okay Ani?" Padme asked quietly. Anakin smirked.

"He'll be fine, he's been through worse than this," Anakin joked.

"Master, wake up. Come on," Anakin said, as he gently smacked at his cheeks. Obi-Wan groaned in pain.

"I feel like a Gondark ran over me," Obi-Wan groaned, as he stood up.

"No mater, this time you were just squished by a metal platform," Anakin quipped.

"Very funny Anakin," Obi-Wan replied.

"Anakin has capture Dooku, but Grevious is still on the loose," Palpatine interjected.

"Good work my old Padawan," Obi-Wan praised, as he took his place behind Dooku and forced him forward.

"The good Count will lead us to him," the older knight said. Count Dooku remained silent, as he had since his defeat at Skywalker's hands. He was still reeling from the kill orders that the Chancellor had given Anakin. But he was even more surprised at how quickly Anakin's dark tendencies were curbed by the presence of Amidala.

His master had lied to him! He was planning on betraying him all along in hopes of turning Skywalker! But it looks like his master's plans were foiled, as he could sense a great change in the force. Skywalker would not turn, but his master would also not let him live, for he knew too much. He had been a fool to join the dark side; he could see the truth now.

Palpatine followed Obi-Wan, his eyes boring into Dooku's back. He was thankful that no one could see him, as his eyes flashed between yellow and their normal green.

With the few moments where everyone's backs were to them, Anakin and Padme shared a longing gaze. Anakin wanted nothing more than to pull her into his arms and kiss her. She had just again proven herself to be an angel, for she had just saved him from doing something terrible. Had she not been there, he probably would have listened to the Chancellor...

Up on the bridge, General Grevious ordered his droids to begin attacking the Republic cruisers. The other ships retaliated and the Imperial Hand shuddered violently.

Up on the spire, Obi-Wan, Anakin and the others waited for the elevator.

"Elevator's not working. Artoo, activate elevator 32224. Artoo beeped and clicked in response, as he headed for the control panel. Suddenly, the ship shuddered again and the Imperial Hand began to dip, causing everyone aboard to slide as the ship turned vertically. Obi-Wan climbed through the opening above them, then helped Dooku and Chancellor Palpatine up. Anakin helped Padme up and then climbed up himself. The five then began running.

In the meantime, those on the bridge worked to get things under control.

"Fire the emergency booster engines," Grevious ordered.

In mid stride, the group of five began to slide again. Anakin grabbed Padme around the waist and grabbed onto a cable with his metal hand. Obi-Wan, Palpatine, and Dooku hung from Anakin's legs. Anakin groaned at the extra weight pulling on his legs.

"Hold on," Anakin told them.

"What is that?" Obi-Wan asked, as the elevator came barreling up at them.

"Oops, Artoo, Artoo, shut down the elevator," Anakin called into the comlink.

"Too late! JUMP!" Obi-Wan called. Anakin let go and he and Padme slid down the wall after them. The two Jedi Knights launched their

extending cables and hooked them onto a support beam above them. They swung themselves and the others onto the next floor, just as the elevator roared by.

"Let's see if we can find anything flyable in the hanger bay," Obi-Wan suggested.

"Artoo, get down here," Anakin ordered into the comlink.

"General, the Jedi are in hallway 328," a droid reported.

"Activate ray shields," the general ordered.

The five people ran down the hallway, when suddenly, a shield surrounded them.

"Ray Shields," Anakin said, as Padme clutched his arm tighter.

"Wait a minute, how did this happen? We're smarter than this!" Obi-Wan griped.

"Apparently not," Anakin responded.

"I say patience," Anakin said. Obi-Wan crossed his arms over his chest.

"Patience?" Obi-Wan questioned.

"Yes, Artoo will be along in a few moments and he'll release the ray shields," Anakin replied. They soon heard a high pitched squeal, as Artoo came sliding into the wall with a hard bang and emitted several clicks and beeps.

"See, no problem," Anakin said. Suddenly, they were surrounded by droids and droidekas.

"Don't move," one droid told Artoo. Artoo zapped him, but the droid just kicked him over.

"Do you have a plan B?" Obi-Wan asked. Anakin gave him an annoyed look, but was silent. Their hands were cuffed and Anakin tried to silently reassure Padme with a loving glance. The droids marched the group to the bridge.

"Ah yes, the negotiator. General Kenobi, that wasn't much of a rescue," Grevious rasped, as he released the cuffs on Dooku. Grevious coughed and rasped.

"And Anakin Skywalker. I was expecting someone with your reputation to be a little older," Grevious coughed.

"General Grevious, your shorter than I expected," Anakin replied sarcastically. The general coughed again.

"Jedi scum," he spat.

"We have a job to do Anakin, try not to upset him," Obi-Wan playfully chided.

"We should resume our plans to deliver the chancellor," Dooku said.

"Sorry Count Dooku, but my master has informed me that you are no longer useful," Grevious rasped, as he plunged his saber through Dooku's chest. Padme screamed, while Obi-Wan and Anakin looked on in shock. Chancellor Palpatine hid a small smile. His secret was safe again. He had instructed Grevious that if Skywalker did not kill Dooku, then it would fall to him to do it. Dooku looked over to the two Jedi.

"Forgive me," he said, as life left him.

"Your lightsabers will make a find addition to my collection," Grevious said, as he tucked them away in his cloak. Obi-Wan recovered from the shock.

"Not this time. And this time, you won't escape," Obi-Wan said.

"Artoo!" Anakin signaled. Artoo squealed and let loose several zaps, freeing Obi-Wan's hands. Obi-Wan called his lightsaber from the General's cloak and freed Anakin, who also called his weapon. The two Jedi knights fought the droid guards, while two other droids pulled Padme and the Chancellor away. Anakin defeated the guard and then freed Padme and the Chancellor. They ran back to the bridge and saw that Obi-Wan had also defeated the other droid. The two Jedi knights destroyed the rest of the droids, then surrounded Grevious. The droid General shoved a staff into the window, shattering it. Grevious escaped, and Anakin pressed a control to seal the broken windows shut. The ship began to break apart.

"All escape pods have been launched," Anakin informed.

"Grevious. Do you know how to fly a cruiser like this?" Obi-Wan asked.

"You mean do I know how to land what's left of this thing," Anakin quipped, as he took the controls.

"Well?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Well, under the circumstances, I'd say the ability to pilot this thing is irrelevant. Strap yourselves in," he told his passengers.

"Open all hatches. Extend all flaps and drag fins," Anakin ordered. The ship broke in two, as it began to descend into the atmosphere. Anakin looked over at Obi-Wan.

"We lost something," Anakin stated.

"Not to worry, we are still flying half a ship," Obi-Wan replied.

"We're really picking up speed. Keep us level," Anakin said, as they entered the atmosphere.

"Steady," Obi-Wan said. Artoo let loose anxious clicks and whistles.

"Easy Artoo!" Anakin demanded.

"Five Thousand. Five ships on the left and the right," Obi-Wan reported. The ships around them deployed water to cool them down.

"The landing strip is right ahead," Obi-Wan informed.

"We're coming in too hot!" Anakin replied. The ship jolted hard, as it hit the ground. It slid and Anakin put on all the brakes, finally bringing them to a stop.

"Another happy landing," Obi-Wan joked.

A shuttle picked them up and took them to the Senate building. Chancellor Palpatine exited the shuttle and was met by his entourage. Anakin and Padme followed him.

"Are you coming master?" Anakin asked.

"Oh no, I'm not brave enough for politics. Besides, I have to report to the council. And I'm afraid I will have to tell them about your marriage," Obi-Wan said. Anakin and Padme nodded.

"I'll come to your apartment to meet with you both in the morning," Obi-Wan said, as he left on the shuttle for the temple. Padme sighed heavily and Anakin had to resist the urge to pull her in his arms since they were in public. Though, he knew it wouldn't be much longer before everyone knew. Senator Organa approached them both.

"Padme, it is good to see you are safe. Jedi Skywalker, the Republic cannot praise you enough," he said.

"Thank you Senator Organa," Anakin replied.

"Thank you Bail. Forgive me for being rude, but Jedi Skywalker has been kind enough to offer to escort me home. I am exhausted," Padme said.

"Of course. Good day to you both," Bail said. Padme sighed in relief, as Dorme and Typho arrived to take them home. Anakin helped her into the speeder and then made sure Artoo was secure in the back next to 3PO.

"Oh milady, we are both so glad to see that your both all right," Dorme said.

"Thank you Dorme," Padme said dejectedly.

"Milady, what's wrong?" Dorme asked. Anakin broke in for her.

"She's just worried. Obi-Wan knows about our marriage, it will not be a secret much longer," Anakin paused to place his hand on Padme's.

"But we'll be fine, no matter what the council decides to do with me," Anakin said, giving her a small smile. She smiled back as best she could, but she was so worried that they would find some way to take him from her.

"They will not take me from you. If we have to hide on Naboo for the rest of our lives, we will. But they will not separate us," Anakin replied, following her line of thinking. She smiled brightly at him, and leaned her head on his shoulder.

Anakin and Padme arrived home and filed in the door, followed by 3PO and Artoo. The droids went about their business, carrying on their usual bantering. Anakin pulled Padme into his arms and kissed her passionately.

"I was so worried when I heard you were captured," Anakin said.

"I'm okay, thanks to you," she replied, before wringing her hands.

"I have wonderful news Ani," she began. He smiled.

"What is it?" he asked, as he cupped her cheek.

"I'm pregnant," she announced. Anakin beamed at her.

"That's...that's wonderful," Anakin replied, as he hugged her.

"What do you think the council will do?" Padme asked, her expression turning to worry.

"I don't know, but let's not worry about that right now. Let's just be together tonight and celebrate this happy moment," Anakin replied, as for the first time, he caressed her rounding belly where their baby was growing. They kissed again longingly, letting their desire and passion overwhelm them. It had been almost six months since they had last seen each other, but it felt like a lifetime.

"I've missed you so much," Anakin said to her, his face only inches from hers.

"I've missed you too Ani," she replied, resting her head against his chest. The couple held each other close, as they looked out over the veranda, watching Coruscant's sun begin to set. They were silent for the time being, knowing that many words would be spoken tomorrow, as Anakin's future as a Jedi would be decided...

Love Knows no Boundaries

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AN: Here's chapter 4! Again, thanks for all the great reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 4: Love Knows no Boundaries

Obi-Wan bowed before the council members. Present were Yoda, Mace Windu, Ki-Adi Mundi, Saesee Tiin, Kit Fisto, Adi Gallia, Plo Koon and the newest member of the council, Luminara Unduli. Luminara was selected to replace Stass Allie, who was killed when the Chancellor was abducted, for she had been assigned to protect him.

"The mission was successful. But Chancellor Palpatine informed me that General Grevious is still at large," Mace Windu began.

"Yes, thanks to Anakin, we were able to capture Count Dooku. However, for unknown reasons, the Count was killed by General Grevious," Obi-Wan reported.

"Wanted to keep secret what Dooku knew, the Dark Lord did. Assume we must, that Dooku was but the apprentice," Yoda said.

"I agree master Yoda. Grevious said something to that effect just before he killed him. He then launched all the escape pods to prevent our survival. Fortunately, we are lucky Anakin was able to pilot what was left of the ship and land us safely," Obi-Wan replied.

"Where is Anakin now?" Mace asked. Obi-Wan sighed.

"That is something we must discuss masters. Despite Anakin's excellent performance of his duties, I must report that he has

confessed to breaking the code," Obi-Wan began.

"How so?" Adi Gallia asked.

"He has formed an attachment and has been married to Senator Amidala for three years," Obi-Wan stated. The council was stunned to silence and Obi-Wan caught sight of Adi Gallia shaking her head in dismay. She had never liked Anakin at all.

"Have you discussed the danger of this with Anakin?" Master Tiin asked.

"Yes master, but Anakin claims the they love each other and that he will not leave her," Obi-Wan replied.

"Then he should be expelled," Adi Gallia suggested.

"But he still may be the chosen one," Luminara argued.

"How can he be? He is far too attached and far too emotional to be a true Jedi," Adi replied.

"I will say masters, that Anakin performed his duties extremely well on the Imperial Hand. The presence of Senator Amidala seemed to ground him and gave him focus. His recklessness was dampened by his concern for her safety," Obi-Wan said.

"But he has broken the code, which warrants expulsion from the order," Adi argued.

"Obi-Wan has suggested that Anakin's attachment has aided him in a positive manner. Perhaps, non-attachment is the wrong path for young Skywalker," Kit Fisto spoke up.

"I'm inclined to agree with Adi, the code is not to be taken lightly," Mace interjected.

"I believe I am not the best to judge anyone on this," Ki-Adi Mundi spoke.

"Master Mundi, your situation is completely different than Skywalker's," Adi replied, referring to Master Mundi's exemption from this particular part of the code.

"Master Yoda, what do you think?" Mace asked. Yoda's ears twitched.

"Dangerous attachment can be. Council them both you must Obi-Wan. Try and convince them separating would be for the best. If refuse they do, make a decision on Skywalker's future in the order we must," Yoda said.

"Meet with them in the morning Obi-Wan. We will convene for another meeting on this matter at the same time tomorrow evening," Mace said.

"Master, before we dismiss, may I make a suggestion?" Luminara asked.

"Of course master Unduli," Mace replied.

"My former padawan, Barriss Offee is a good friend of Anakin's. Perhaps she could accompany Master Obi-Wan tomorrow and talk to Anakin," Luminara suggested.

"Good idea. Obi-Wan, seek out Barriss and explain the situation to her. Then, have her accompany you tomorrow morning," Mace ordered. Obi-Wan bowed.

"Yes master," Obi-Wan replied.

Anakin watched her with a smile, as she brushed out her beautiful curls. She was dressed in a purple nightgown, revealing the bulge in her stomach. She was so beautiful and he sometimes felt that he didn't deserve her. His sudden frown did not go unnoticed by his beloved.

"Ani, what's wrong?" she asked softly. He gave her a half smile.

"It's nothing," he replied.

"Don't shut me out, I want to help you," Padme pleaded. He turned to her, tears welling in his eyes. She ran her hands up his smooth chest and rested them on his shoulders.

"I would have killed him. He was unarmed and I would have killed him if you hadn't stopped me," Anakin said. She held him tightly, as he buried his face in the nape of her neck, as sobs began to rack his broad shoulders.

"What is wrong with me Padme? How can you even stand to look at me?" Anakin cried. He brought his face up to hers where her chocolate orbs met his ocean blue pools. She gently swiped his tears away with her thumbs, as she held his face in her hands.

"I love you Anakin Skywalker. That will never change," she stated, as she brushed his shaggy curls from his eyes.

"But my anger, why can't I seem to control it," he asked, frustrated.

Padme swallowed hard and slowly stood up. She walked over to retrieve a datapad from her desk drawer.

"There's something I need to show you Ani. Something that I wasn't supposed to find and something that will make you very angry. It will hurt you and I don't want to show you, but you have to know. You have to know so you can begin to heal and take control of your anger," Padme said, as she turned on the datapad and handed it to him...

Anakin sat there, staring numbly at the datapad. Tears silently streamed down his cheeks. Disbelief, sadness, and anger were all emotions that were passing over his handsome features. Padme clutched his hands in hers, tears sliding down her cheeks as well.

"I stumbled upon this just the other night and it made me sick. I...I couldn't believe that...someone would do that to you," Padme cried, as she hugged him close and cried.

"Why...why would they do this...whoever it was?" Anakin said, his jaw clenched in anger.

"I think...I think it could have been the Sith," she replied. Anakin's eyes widened, as he remembered back to that night. It was like a dark blanket had covered him. Something inside of him caused him to snap. It told him to kill those who had killed his mother, and not to just stop there, but to kill the entire village. His anger had erupted and he had killed in cold blood. He had touched the dark side and used it to kill that night. Someone had tried to turn him to the dark side and they would have succeeded had Padme not pulled him back. Suddenly, he remembered something that Obi-Wan had told him after Geonosis.

"I...I remember something Obi-Wan said that Dooku told him on Geonosis," Anakin said, finally finding his voice again.

"What was it?" Padme asked.

"Dooku told him that the senate was under the control of a Sith Lord called Darth Sidious. But Obi-Wan didn't believe him and neither did the council. Padme's jaw dropped at the prospect that the council had just ignored such a threat without further investigation. She had always thought the Jedi council members to be wiser than that.

"I would have thought the Jedi would have taken a statement like that more seriously," Padme replied. Anakin scoffed.

"The council thinks that they would be able to sense something like that, even though Master Yoda always admits that the dark side clouds everything," Anakin replied.

"What should we do?" Padme asked.

"I think we should tell Obi-Wan when he comes for us in the morning. Then we can decide what to do from there," Anakin suggested.

"Do you think the Sith Lord is actually someone in the Senate or that he is just controlling someone in the Senate?" Padme asked.

"I don't know," he replied honestly. Anakin lowered his head in shame.

"Whoever did this to my mother wanted to turn me to the dark side and I've been playing right into their hands," Anakin said shamefully.

"But you don't have to anymore. And I'll always be here to go through everything with you. We'll face whatever we have to and we'll face it together," Padme told him. Anakin pulled her into his lap, as they sat down on the couch. Padme cuddled close to him and rested her head on his chest.

"If the Sith Lord knows that you found that information, you and the baby could be in danger," Anakin said, as he gently caressed her growing stomach.

"I couldn't bare it if anything happened to either of you," he said.

"But we'll be fine, because you're here with us. Have faith in our love Ani, for it will always be enough to save us," Padme replied.

"You're right. We need each other now more than ever. The council will not take lightly to the news of our marriage. We're going to have one hell of a fight on our hands," he stated. She smiled slightly.

"Well, I think from our past experiences, it's safe to say that we make a pretty good team," she said, tracing the lines on his bare chest. He gave her one of his roguish smiles.

"That we do," he replied, before capturing her lips in a passionate kiss. He moved down her jaw line and to her neck where he sensually kissed his way up and down. Padme closed her eyes and

tangled her fingers through his hair. She felt that familiar warmth spread though her body, as his hands touched her. He slowly lifted her into his arms and carried her to their bedroom.

Ruin. That was the best word to describe the condition of all his carefully laid out plans. He had grossly underestimated the power that Amidala had over Skywalker. Or at least, underestimated it in the wrong manner. She was not supposed to be on Grevious' ship when Skywalker and Kenobi came to rescue him. Why in blazes had she been coming to see him that morning? To annoy him with more of her pitiful pacifist talk? He asked himself these questions angrily, barely being able to contain his rage.

Reaching into the force, he consulted his visions of the future. At one time, only days ago, he had seen the chosen one falling to him. He had been planning on manipulating Anakin's dreams again, as he had when he ordered the death of his mother. She was supposed to be why he turned, not why he didn't. Now, those visions of Anakin's turn and Amidala's death were gone. What he saw now sickened him. He saw happiness for Skywalker and his family with no chance of darkness prevailing.

He sneered evilly, as he opened his eyes. More than thirteen years of planning was down the drain. He foresaw that if he struck now, he would be destroyed. No, he needed an apprentice and had to suppress the roar of anger that threaten to escape his mouth when he realized he could never have the chosen one. He needed someone new and someone powerful. No Jedi possessed the incredible connection that Anakin had to the Force, and now he would never have him, because of that meddlesome woman. He opened his senses to the Force now. He would have to begin to search for another to train as his apprentice. Someone useful and powerful enough, at least until someone more powerful came along that is.

This would set his visions of grand Empire back several years he knew. But he would have to adjust or he would be destroyed before

his plans could be realized. He would now begin his search for a new apprentice...

Happiness and bliss were emotions that reverberated through the Skywalker apartment. Padme and Anakin lay in bed together, limbs tangled, bodies entwined, sleeping peacefully in each other's arms. Anakin slowly opened his eyes and stretched his arms over his head. He brushed Padme's curls aside and kissed her cheek. Padme stirred and turned on her back.

"Good morning handsome," she said, stretching her arms.

"Morning beautiful angel," he replied, pecking her on the lips.

"Oh," Padme exclaimed.

"What's wrong?" he asked, his face getting serious. She smiled.

"Nothing, your son just kicked me. Here, feel," she said, placing his hand on her bare stomach. The baby kicked again and Anakin's eyes lit up in wonder.

"Hey, what makes you think it's a boy. She kicks hard like you," Anakin teased. Padme huffed playfully.

"So you think it's a girl?" she asked.

"Yep," he replied.

"Okay, we should discuss names anyway. And this is a good time," Padme said.

"Before breakfast?" he asked playfully, earning him a smack on his stomach.

"You and that stomach. And knowing my luck, our baby will eat just like you, with better table manners of course," Padme teased. He chuckled.

"I'm not that bad. Mom tried to teach me some manners," he protested.

"Yes and you were far too busy being a boy to listen to her," Padme replied. Anakin chuckled again. It felt good talking about the good memories he had of his mother. Something was different now. It no longer pained him to think of her. Perhaps, knowing the truth had healed him more quickly than he could have imagined.

"Do you have a boy's name picked out?" Anakin asked.

"As matter of fact I do. What do you think of Luke?" she asked hopefully.

"Luke...I like it. What does it mean?" Anakin asked.

"It means Light in ancient Nubian," Padme replied and Anakin smiled.

"It's perfect and it even matches the name I chose if we have a girl," Anakin replied.

"You chose a Nubian name?" she asked, highly impressed. Though, as a Jedi, Anakin had been schooled in many languages. He nodded.

"What do you think of Leia?" he asked. Padme smiled.

"Leia means little angel in ancient Nubian," Padme replied, knowing that Anakin would make it a point to know a word like that. Anakin nodded.

"You're my angel and she'll be my little angel," Anakin stated.

"If we have a girl," she stated. He smiled and kissed her tenderly. Knowing they would soon have company, the couple knew that they had to get up and get ready.

Obi-Wan Kenobi glanced over at Jedi Knight Barriss Offee, as they rode the turbo lift to Senator Amidala's (or was it Skywalker now?) apartment. Barriss was silent and Obi-Wan knew she was not happy about what he had revealed to her. Anakin was her friend and he supposed that she felt betrayed. Barriss was also very distrusting of politicians, even though Obi-Wan had tried to assure her that Padme was different from other politicians. Part of him was still very much angry at them both for being so selfish. But another part of him, the part of him that considered Anakin and Padme as a brother and a sister was happy for them. He had seen the way they had looked at each other and there was definitely some sort of connection between them. The two Jedi arrived at the Senator's apartment. Obi-Wan pressed the door chime to alert their hosts of their arrival.

Anakin answered the door with Padme at his side. He was dressed in his usual dark brown and black Jedi tunic and pants. The senator was dressed in a simple royal purple gown and it was then that Obi-Wan noticed the bulge in her stomach. And judging by the look on Barriss' face, she did also.

"Come in," Anakin said. Obi-Wan and Barriss entered and Padme motioned for them to take a seat. Anakin and Padme took a seat on the couch across from them, hand in hand. Anakin went straight to the point.

"What has the council decided?" Anakin asked.

"Perhaps before we discuss that, maybe I could have a word with Padme. Barriss would like to speak with you Anakin," Obi-Wan began. Anakin and Padme exchanged silent glances, then they both nodded.

"We can speak out on the veranda," Anakin told Barriss, as he led her out there.

Obi-Wan smiled gently at Padme and she smiled back.

"You're with child?" Obi-Wan asked. Padme couldn't help but smile.

"Yes," she replied.

"How did Anakin take it?" he asked.

"Anakin is as thrilled as I am. We both want this baby," Padme assured him.

"I apologize for the questions Padme, I'm only doing as the council has asked," Obi-Wan replied. Padme nodded.

"Padme, the council believes that it may be best for you and Anakin to divorce or separate at the very least," Obi-Wan said.

"You want me to leave to Anakin?" she asked in disbelief.

"The council wants you and Anakin to separate," Obi-Wan replied.

"What do you want Obi-Wan?" she asked.

"This isn't about me Padme," Obi-Wan replied.

"That's funny, because I think it is. Anakin and I consider you family! I thought you considered us family as well," Padme crossed her arms over her chest.

"Padme, you know this isn't my decision. I consider you and Anakin my family too, but even that is considered attachment and is against the code. I must be very careful," Obi-Wan replied.

"I would never leave Anakin, it would break his heart and mine. And I won't deny our child his or her father," Padme replied. Obi-Wan sighed heavily. Meanwhile, Anakin and Barriss own conversation was not going any better.

"What are you doing here?" Anakin asked.

"The council believed that I may be able to get you to see reason since we're friends, or at least I thought we were," Barriss bite off. Anakin snorted.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Anakin asked.

"What do you think it means! You're married! What in blazes are you thinking!" Barriss cried.

"You know, I'm getting really tired of that question. Padme and I love each other and we're about to start a family," Anakin replied.

"You're a Jedi and your attachment to this woman is dangerous!" Barriss protested.

"I love her so don't even ask me to leave her, because I will never do that," Anakin stated.

"You'll be expelled! Come to your senses!" Barriss cried.

"Then the council can expel me if that is what they wish. I love being a Jedi, but I love her more," Anakin replied.

"You're going to throw all your training away for some fling!" Barriss yelled. Anakin scoffed.

"It is not some *fling* ! But it doesn't matter, because you'll never understand. This conversation is over," Anakin said, as he went back inside. Barriss calmed her emotions and released them into the force, before following him back in. Padme stood up and went to him, wrapping her arms around his waist. She could tell his conversation with Barriss did not go well.

"Senator Amidala, do you realize that the council will expel Anakin for his marriage to you?" Barriss asked. Padme took a deep breath.

"I know and I never wanted Anakin to have to give up his career for me. But we're in love. And we've made the decision to do whatever we must to be together. Anakin is a wonderful Jedi and a wonderful

husband. I know that he could do both. I implore you both to make this suggestion to the council for him. I know it's not the Jedi way, but Anakin is different. Love and attachment are a part of who he is, you can't change that," Padme implored. Barriss crossed her arms over her chest.

"We had done a pretty good job of it before you came back into his life and seduced him," Barriss accused the Senator. Obi-Wan had not been expecting that and was not able to hide his surprise.

"What?" Padme asked in disbelief.

"You've crossed the line Barriss!" Anakin yelled, his jaw clenching.

"You're the chosen one!" Barriss reiterated.

"Don't call me that, you know I hate it!" Anakin yelled back.

"I never thought you'd turn your back on the Jedi, Skywalker. And especially not for a politician," Barriss said.

"They've forced me to do it. I'm nothing without Padme. It would be wise for you to stop attacking my wife," he replied. She was about to retort, but Obi-Wan stopped her.

"Barriss, I believe we have their decision. We must now report back to the council," Obi-Wan interrupted. Barriss stalked out of the room, followed by Obi-Wan.

"The council will probably wish to see you both before they make their final decision. Is it all right if I come back after the meeting?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Of course Obi-Wan, why don't you join us for dinner?" Padme suggested.

"Very well, I'll see you both then," Obi-Wan replied.

"You were out of line," Obi-Wan chided the young knight.

"Me? He's the one that's married with a baby on the way!" Barriss retorted.

"Yes, but attacking the Senator is only a sure way to drive Anakin farther from us," Obi-Wan replied wisely.

"She seduced him. He's not even thinking straight," Barriss replied.

"I disagree. I've known Padme since she was just 14 and she's not like that," Obi-Wan replied. Barriss was silent for the rest of their trip back to the temple.

Anakin hugged Padme tightly.

"I'm sorry she attacked you," Anakin told her.

"Anakin, what if she's right?" Padme asked.

"What?" he asked.

"You *are* the chosen one. You have an important duty to the Jedi. What if I'm not supposed to be interfering with your life?" Padme asked, defeated. Anakin lifted her chin so their eyes would meet.

"No Padme, I'm meant to be with you. The Force showed me that I was, don't ask me how or why, but it showed me that you were my destiny. We have to stand up for what we believe is right and this is right. Our marriage is right, please don't ever doubt that," Anakin pleaded. She sniffed and brushed a few tears away.

"I'm sorry, I guess she just got to me a little more than I would have liked," Padme replied. He kissed her softly.

"Don't listen to them Padme. They're going to try and place blame on us both, but we have to be strong. I know in my heart that being with you is the right thing. And I know you believe it too," Anakin told her. She nodded.

"You know I do. I just hate that you might have to give up being a Jedi for me. It's been your dream," Padme replied.

"You're my dream," Anakin answered. Tears welled in her eyes again, as Anakin's lips moved passionately over hers, conveying his undying love for her...

The Council's Decision

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AN: Here's chapter 5! Enjoy!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 5: The Council's Decision

"What do you have to report?" Mace Windu asked, as Obi-Wan and Barriss stood before them.

"They have refused to separate," Barriss reported.

"Then we have no choice but to expel him," Adi said.

"What feel you, Master Kenobi?" Yoda asked.

"I believe that perhaps we should allow them to be together masters. There is an interesting connection between the two. She seems to ground him and keep him focused," Obi-Wan said.

"Perhaps you are blinded by your affection for your former padawan," Adi suggested. Obi-Wan looked at her sharply.

"I don't think so. I know him very well. And I know attachment is forbidden, but perhaps an exception should be made for Anakin. He is not one that is able to keep himself unattached. His attachments define who he is," Obi-Wan said.

"Then perhaps he should not be a Jedi," Master Windu replied.

"How do you feel Barriss?" Luminara asked her former padawan.

"I believe that we should make them separate," Barriss replied. Obi-Wan's head turned to her the second those words left her mouth.

"That would only be a destructive move. We wouldn't be able to keep them apart. And it would destroy the progress that Anakin has made lately," Obi-Wan replied.

"Progress?" Plo Koon questioned.

"Dampened his anger has become. Controlled it is as of late. No longer blames anyone, not even himself, for his mother's death he does," Yoda said knowingly.

"Then if he can learn to control his anger, he can learn to control his passion," Adi said. Obi-Wan sighed, defeated.

"Make our final decision we will once spoken to them we have. Until then, meditate on this I will," Yoda said, effectively adjourning the council meeting.

Barriss Offee entered her quarters and noticed that her padawan was waiting for her. The girl actually wasn't more than a few years younger than her, but her master was recently killed in the clone wars. In fact, she would have been killed too, but Anakin had saved her from the violent explosion that had killed her master and three other Jedi. The council had entrusted her to complete the gifted padawan's training. She was very skilled with a saber and commanded a powerful force presence. Zara Caelan was very attractive, with long black hair and coal black eyes. She was fiercely competitive and an expert in the arts of hand to hand combat. Lately, her anger at her master's death had begun to worry Barriss. The girl was becoming very aggressive in her training. So much so, that some of the masters had to interfere when she was sparring with the other senior padawans.

"Is it true what they're saying about Anakin?" Zara asked.

"Yes, I'm afraid so Zara," Barriss replied.

"What is the council going to do about him?" she pried.

"They haven't made their decision yet. I want you do some meditation exercises before evening meal," Barriss told her, as she left for her room. Zara nodded and settled herself down on the floor.

She knew that jealously and hatred were wrong, but those were emotions she was feeling toward Senator Amidala right now. She knew that attachment was forbidden, but ever since Anakin had saved her life, she had been drawn to him. And apparently, the rule of against attachment meant nothing to Skywalker. She couldn't be in love with him! She just couldn't be!

She had even talked to master Offee about it and surprisingly, Barriss had not scolded her as hard as she had thought she might. Barriss had told her that many Jedi experience emotions of infatuation, often towards another fellow Jedi. She had told her that she herself experienced similar feelings when she and Anakin were still padawans. She had said it was hard not to feel attracted to Anakin, for he was very handsome after all.

But she warned against letting the infatuation turn in to anything more, because it could lead to the dark side, especially if her affections were not returned. And now she knew that her affections weren't returned, because Anakin loved another. He loved a Senator, a politician, a force blind weakling woman! He had been assigned to be her protector and the senator had probably seduced him. Hopefully, the council would set it all right. Through her meditations, Zara tried to calm the storming emotions within her...

In his office, Supreme Chancellor Palpatine's head shot up from his datapad, as he felt the feelings of anger, hate, jealousy, and even love being released into the force. He closed his eyes and reached deeply into the force to find the source. He was successful in finding the source and he opened his eyes, a wicked smile spreading across his face...

Obi-Wan waited patiently for the door to open.

"Oh, hello master Kenobi, come right in," 3PO greeted.

"Thank you 3PO," Obi-Wan replied, as he stepped in.

"Hello master," Anakin greeted.

"Hello Anakin, it smells absolutely wonderful in here," Obi-Wan said.

"That would be Padme's cooking, you're in for a real treat. Let me take your cloak," Anakin offered. Obi-Wan took it off and handed it to 3PO.

"Take a seat master," Anakin gestured.

"Can I do anything for you master Ani?" 3PO asked.

"Maybe see if Padme needs any help in the kitchen 3PO. She shouldn't be lifting anything too heavy," Anakin replied.

"Of course master Ani," 3PO replied obediently. A few minutes later, Padme called them into the dining room and they sat down for dinner. After the main course, 3PO served them Shuura fruit for desert and their conversation turned serious once they retired to the sitting room.

"So what did the council say?" Padme asked. Obi-Wan set his drink down and folded his hands.

"They are very divided. When you come tomorrow, expect a lot of questions, some perhaps even personal. But you will have to answer in order to make your case," Obi-Wan told them.

"Master, it is me that they are concerned with. Maybe we don't need to drag Padme in to this," Anakin suggested.

"No, I'm going with you. We're facing this together," Padme insisted, laying her hand on his.

"I just don't want to put you under any more stress. It's not good for you or the baby," Anakin replied.

"We'll be fine Ani," she insisted. Obi-Wan smiled surely. He hadn't been sure when he had come to see them earlier, but now he was positive that he was sensing two force signatures inside of Padme. He was surprised Anakin hadn't sensed it, but he figured the stress he was under wasn't allowing the force to flow clearly around him.

"You mean children," Obi-Wan said. Anakin and Padme stopped talking to each other and faced him, their mouths ajar.

"Children?" Anakin asked.

"Clear your mind Anakin and you can clearly sense two force signatures inside Padme," Obi-Wan said. Anakin exhaled and closed his eyes, while placing his hand on Padme's stomach. Anakin smiled and opened his eyes after a few quiet moments.

"He's right Padme, we're having twins!" Anakin exclaimed.

"Oh Ani, could you tell if they were boys or girls?" Padme asked, as she hugged him.

"No, I just saw their heads, but they're beautiful Padme," Anakin said tenderly, as he brushed some of her curls away from her face. Obi-Wan studied them and clearly sensed the change in Anakin and he was very curious as to why. What had master Yoda seen? Was Anakin's future clearer than it had been in the past?

"Back to your question Padme, I think you'll find that the council is very divided on this matter. Some think Anakin should be expelled. Some think the two of you should be forced to separate. And a few think that we should make an exception for you. Master Yoda has told me that he senses that you no longer blame the Jedi or yourself for your mother's death. I must ask how this change has come about," Obi-Wan questioned. Anakin and Padme exchanged glances with Anakin, as he got up and retrieved a data pad from the desk

drawer. He handed it to his former master and Obi-Wan began to look over the information...

"I...I guess I don't understand. Anakin, you told me your mother was abducted and killed by Tuskan raiders," Obi-Wan said.

"She was killed by them, but this proves that someone else set her death up to hurt me," Anakin replied.

"The Sith," Obi-Wan replied knowingly, as he stroked his beard thoughtfully.

"Padme, how in the world did you stumble upon this information?" Obi-Wan asked.

"By accident really. I saw an encrypted file in the budget database and I wanted to know what it was. Artoo's encryption chip unlocked it for me and what I found make me sick. I couldn't believe that anyone would do this to my Ani. The next morning, I was going to visit Chancellor Palpatine. I wasn't planning on telling him what I knew, but I wanted to try and get a feel for what he knew . There's a lot of stuff on that datapad that isn't encrypted and I could think of a lot of better places for those funds to be going. When I got there, the Chancellor's guards were dead and Dooku was kidnaping him. That's when he captured me too," Padme explained.

"I won't let them turn me to the dark side," Anakin insisted.

"I'm glad to see that you're finally recognizing how dangerous your anger can be if you do not control it," Obi-Wan chided his former padawan.

"I do master. I realize that I can't blame anyone but the Sith, not the Jedi and not myself anymore. I finally feel like I'm healing," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan smiled at him.

"The truth shall always set us free Anakin," Obi-Wan reminded him. He stood up and retrieved his cloak.

"It's getting late. I'll see you both at the council meeting tomorrow morning. We shall just have to hope that they see things our way," Obi-Wan said.

"Wait Obi-Wan, there's one more thing we need to ask you," Padme said, as she glanced at Anakin. He smiled and nodded.

"Anakin and I want you to be our children's godfather. You're like a brother to both of us," Padme said. Obi-Wan smiled at them both.

"I would be honored. May the force be with you both," Obi-Wan said.

"May the force be with you too master," Anakin bid him good night.

Anakin enveloped her in a hug and she melted in his embrace.

"I'm scared about tomorrow Ani," she told him.

"I know my love, but no matter what they decide, we'll be together always. I promise," he replied. They shared a passionate kiss, before retiring for the night...

The next morning

Jedi Knight Barriss Offee and Padawan Zara Caelan waited nearby, as Anakin landed the speeder on the docking bay. He hopped out and went over to help Padme, who was having trouble getting in and out of the speeder these days, due to her condition. Arm in arm, Anakin and Padme approached the two Jedi and both bowed respectfully.

"Barriss, Zara," Anakin greeted. Barriss and Zara nodded and motioned for them to follow.

"We are to escort you to the council chambers," was all Barriss said to them.

Once they arrived, they were ushered inside and the doors slid shut behind them.

"Welcome Skywalker, Senator Amidala," Mace greeted, as he ushered them to sit down in the two chairs that were centered in the middle of the room. Mace motioned that it was okay for Barriss and her padawan to remain.

"Obi-Wan and Barriss have told us that you refuse to separate. Do you both still stand firm on this decision even if it means expulsion from the order?" Mace asked. Husband and wife exchanged glances and nodded.

"Yes master Windu," Anakin replied.

"Obi-Wan has claimed that he believes you can perform your duties as a Jedi even with your marriage to the Senator. Can you back up this claim Anakin?" Kit Fisto asked.

"Yes master, I believe I can. I have been performing my duties to the Republic these past three years, just as Padme has in the Senate," Anakin replied.

"But you cannot say your duty is the most important thing to you. As a Jedi, your duty must be first and foremost," Luminara stated.

"Yes master Unduli, Padme and our children are the most important things to me. But I can assure the council that I will still perform my duties to the best of my abilities, because protecting the Republic will ensure their safety," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan smiled to himself, pleased by Anakin's rational answers and calm demeanor. He was finally growing up and while Obi-Wan wanted to take the credit, he knew that a large part of that credit should be allowed to Padme.

"Senator Amidala, attachment is forbidden for a Jedi. Why would you pursue such a relationship?" Adi asked.

"We fell in love Master Gallia. And the fact that it was forbidden did not make us love each other any less. I will never regret marrying Anakin, he is my life," Padme told her.

"So you admit to seducing him away from the code of the Jedi," Adi replied.

Padme jaw clenched.

"I did *not* seduce Anakin, no matter how much all of you would love to believe that," she retorted. Anakin squeezed her hand reassuringly.

"Master Gallia is concerned, because such an attachment could lead to the dark side," Plo Koon interjected.

"I will not turn to the dark side," Anakin insisted.

"And what makes you so sure Skywalker?" Adi asked.

"Because Padme has saved me from the dark side," Anakin stated.

"And how has she done that?" Mace asked skeptically.

"I can back Anakin up on this master Windu. Padme did discover a startling revelation concerning dealings in the Senate," Obi-Wan replied.

"Share this information with us, you must," Yoda told Padme.

"I discovered an encrypted file late one night among various budget files I was looking through," Padme started.

"Why were you searching through the budget files?" Adi asked.

"I wanted to know where all the funds were going. Believe me, I think of better places for funds to be going than where the Senate is putting them. Anyway, my curiosity got the better of me and using Artoo's encryption chip, I decoded the file. And what I found make me sick. Someone in the Senate, I don't know who, paid an unknown bounty hunter to kidnap Shmi Skywalker. The bounty hunter then made it appear that Tuskan raiders took her, which in reality she was really abducted by the bounty hunter and given to the Tuskans who were responsible for killing her. Someone tried to turn my husband to the dark side and I believe it was the Sith," Padme explained.

"Yes, master Yoda has sensed a change in you Anakin. He says that you are indeed learning to control your anger. If you can do this, why is it that you cannot control your passion?" Adi questioned.

"My *love* for Padme is not something that can be controlled. Love is boundless and unconditional," Anakin replied.

"The council is enlightened by this revelation of the Sith. We will be keeping a much closer eye on the Senate now. But the matter of what we will do about your situation is still at hand. The council has discussed several options and we will now present them to you," Mace said. Anakin and Padme nodded.

"Your first option, of course, is a separation. This is what the council prefers that you would choose," Mace said. Anakin shook his head negatively.

"No Masters, that one is not an option. Separating us would only destroy us both," Anakin refused.

"Very well Anakin, if you do not except the second offer, then we will have no choice but to expel you," Mace said.

"What is the second offer, master Windu?" Padme asked.

"We make an exception for you both, but only on one condition," Mace stated. Anakin stiffened at the word condition. He did not have

a good feeling about this condition, but Mace proceeded.

"You allow us to take custody of your twins and raise them to be Jedi here in the temple," Mace stated stoically. Padme couldn't suppress a gasp.

"I would get to see them, wouldn't I?" Padme asked. Mace Windu stared at her with his coal black eyes and she had to fight the urge to shiver.

"No. You would not be allowed contact with them, nor would they be allowed to know of their true parentage," Padme covered her mouth with her hands.

"If you choose this option, we would need to take the twins right after they are born," Mace said. Padme shook her head and grasped for Anakin's hand.

"No deal, I won't allow you to take our children from their mother," Anakin said firmly.

"Anakin, you have to realize that even if you don't give up the twins to us, that they're midichlorian counts will have to be taken at six months anyway. And if they are high enough, you will have to release them to the temple. It is Republic law after all. Senator Amidala should know that. Do you both really want to get attached to them? It will only make it harder," Adi replied coldly.

"I said NO.Do you have any idea what you're asking us to do! You want us to just give our children up like it's no big deal! You will not take them from us," Anakin insisted.

"You have not chosen either of the two choices, so we have no choice, but to enforce the third. Anakin's jaw clenched and he nodded.

"Anakin Skywalker, you are hereby expelled from the Jedi order. Hand over your lightsaber," Mace ordered. Anakin undid the weapon

and tossed it to Master Windu, catching a glimpse of Obi-Wan's shocked expression.

Anakin helped his wife up and put his arms around her waist. She was struggling hard to keep her composure, which was normally very easy for Padme when she was in public. But being six months pregnant was not helping her fight down the torrent emotions whirring inside of her. Calmly with his wife by his side, Anakin Skywalker walked out of the council chambers, not looking back.

Mace Windu, Adi Gallia, and Plo Koon looked confident in the decision that had been made, truly believing they had done what they must. Kit Fisto, Ki-Adi Mundi, and Luminara Unduli didn't look so sure. They had been rather cold in regards to the Senator's feelings, and it was leaving a sense of wrongness within them. Obi-Wan looked very distraught and quietly left the council chambers to see off those he considered as family. Yoda sat quietly in the center of the room, his expression unreadable as usual and his own feelings quietly concealed to himself. No one was sure what the little green master felt of their decision...only time would tell.

Obi-Wan approached the couple that was standing by their speeder.

"Obi-Wan, can you please stay with Padme for a few minutes. There are a few things I need to get in my quarters," Anakin said.

"Of course Anakin," Obi-Wan said, as he watched Anakin walk back into the temple.

Anakin didn't have much in his quarters, for Jedi were not allowed possessions. He packed the few holos he had of he and Obi-Wan from over the years. He packed a few other belongings in the bag and clasped it shut. As he was going to leave, he saw Zara in the doorway.

"Hello Zara," he said.

"How could you Anakin? You were the chosen one. We all looked up to you," Zara said.

"I'm sorry that you feel that way Zara, but I will not be sorry for loving my wife," Anakin replied.

"I just hope you don't regret your decision," Zara said.

"I could never regret being with Padme. Goodbye Zara," Anakin replied, as he left for the docking bay where Padme was waiting. Zara watched as he left, those familiar feelings of jealousy beginning to nip at her again...

Anakin and Padme arrived home and Padme could no longer hold back her tears. Anakin wrapped her in his arms and let her cry.

"Everything's going to be okay angel," Anakin said, as he stroked his hands through her curls.

"Oh Ani, please don't let them take away our babies," she cried.

"Never Padme, never. We'll find a way to keep that from happening, even if we have to hide ourselves away. I promise they will not take them from us," Anakin told her. She looked up at him, suddenly very proud of him. He was angry at the council, but he was controlling it. She sniffed and buried her face in his chest again, as he continued to slowly rock her.

Early the next morning...

Anakin stood on the veranda, attempting to meditate as Coruscant's sun began to peek onto the horizon. Normally, he found this time of morning especially perfect for his meditation exercises. But not this morning.

"Good morning master," Anakin said, as Obi-Wan approached.

"I hope you don't mind, 3PO let me in. We didn't get a chance to speak last night after the council meeting," Obi-Wan replied.

"You'll always be welcome in our home Obi-Wan," Anakin stated, without turning to him.

"I'm truly sorry for everything that was said at the meeting last night. I never knew such things would be said," Obi-Wan apologized.

"I know master, Padme and I don't blame you," he replied.

"Anakin, I know you're angry. It may be righteous anger, but I just want you to be careful," Obi-Wan chided gently.

"My wife cried herself to sleep last night Obi-Wan. I have every right to be angry with those that caused that," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan winced, thinking about what Padme must be going through.

"I agree with you," Obi-Wan added.

"How could they master? How could they be so heartless?" Anakin cried, his eyes misting. Obi-Wan silently put a hand on his former padawan's shoulder.

"How can they stand their stoic and tell a mother-to-be that they are going to take her children away from her the moment after she gives birth to them!" Anakin yelled. Obi-Wan squeezed his shoulder in reassurance.

"I won't let them take our babies. If we have to hide for the rest of our lives, they won't take them!" Anakin promised.

"Anakin, I know that I've always been a staunch supporter of the code, but I want you to know that I am behind you and Padme on this," Obi-Wan replied.

"Thank you Obi-Wan, that means a lot to me," Anakin sniffed. Obi-Wan patted his shoulder and handed him a small case.

"What's this?" Anakin asked.

"It's a new crystal. You should have everything you need to build a new saber," Obi-Wan said.

"I'm not a Jedi anymore," Anakin replied.

"No, but you're a husband and a father to be. You have a family to protect," Obi-Wan replied.

"Thank you Obi-Wan," Anakin replied.

The two heard soft footsteps behind them and turned to see a crestfallen Padme. Anakin opened his arms and she dove into them. He wrapped them tightly and protectively around her and just held her. Obi-Wan silently walked back inside, leaving the young husband and wife alone...

Uncertain Future

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It all belongs to LFL.

AN: Here's chapter 6! Thanks for all the kind reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 6: Uncertain Future

Knight Barriss Offee and Padawan Zara Caelan stood before the council to receive their next assignment.

"The council has assigned you and your padawan to keep a close eye on the Senate. Barriss, you and Zara will also provide heightened security for the Chancellor," Mace informed them. Barriss and Zara nodded and left for the Senate building. Zara silently brooded over their new mission. Spending her days in the boring Senate sessions with snooty politicians, which included Amidala, was not sitting well with her.

"Be mindful of your thoughts padawan," Barriss lightly scolded.

"I'm sorry master. I am still having harsh feelings toward Amidala. Many other padawans feel like she stole Anakin from us too," Zara said.

"Maybe Zara, but you cannot let those feelings consume you. Let it go padawan," Barriss instructed.

"Yes master," she replied, but she didn't know if she could.

A few days had passed since Anakin and Padme's meeting with the council. The Senate, which had been adjourned since Chancellor Palpatine's kidnaping was convening this morning. Anakin snuggled Padme a little closer to him, knowing that he would soon have to

wake her up so she could get ready for a long day of Senate sessions and meetings.

The last few days they had spent quality time together, something they really hadn't done before. Usually most of their secret meetings were very short lived. But now, he would be by her side every morning she woke up. That made her happy and whatever made her happy, made him happy.

They had talked a lot about the future in the last few days. They still had to tell her parents and sister about their marriage, not to mention tell them about her pregnancy. He could tell she was a little nervous about it, but her family seemed to only want to see her happy, so he hoped they would understand why they kept this secret for so long. Padme's future in the Senate was also uncertain. He knew that master Yoda and master Windu would be informing the Chancellor of the situation soon. He hoped the Chancellor took it well and did not demand for Padme's resignation on the spot.

Then, there was Queen Apilana to deal with, whom Padme would be speaking with today. Apilana may ask for her resignation too. Anakin felt a bit guilty about Padme possibly losing her career too. But Padme assured him that if it came to that, she was fine with it. If they did go home to Naboo, she even expressed an interest in teaching a few classes at the University in Theed after the twins were older. He had decided that whatever he did, it would be building and fixing things. It had always made him happy, just like Padme did. He smiled and brushed her curls away from her eyes.

"Angel, it's time to wake up," Anakin told her.

Obi-Wan Kenobi stood before the council awaiting his next assignment. They were probably going to send him back to the outer rim sieges, and it would be quite lonely without Anakin.

"We have received intelligence that General Grevious has infiltrated the Utapau system," Mace began.

"Go you will Obi-Wan. Once captured or killed Grevious is, the war will end," Yoda said. Obi-Wan nodded and bowed. The council was adjourned and Mace and Yoda left for their meeting with Chancellor Palpatine.

"Good morning master Yoda, master Windu," Chancellor Palpatine greeted.

"Good morning Chancellor. Much to discuss we have," Yoda said.

"Please sit and be comfortable," Palpatine offered. The two Jedi masters did so.

"Has your intelligence told you anything of General Grevious' whereabouts?" Palpatine asked.

"He has been spotted on Utapau. We have dispatched Master Kenobi to deal with him," Mace said.

"You should have sent Anakin with him. Grevious is almost too much for only one Jedi," Palpatine said. Mace and Yoda glanced at each other.

"Chancellor, Anakin Skywalker has been expelled from the Jedi order," Mace stated. Shock washed over the Chancellor's face.

"Expelled? He was such a gifted boy," the Chancellor said.

"He broke the code. He and Senator Amidala married in secret. We have dealt with Skywalker, but it is your discretion to deal with Amidala," Mace said.

"It is not illegal for Senators to be married, but her constituents may call for her resignation. I will tread lightly with this information. We don't want to put her in danger," Palpatine said.

"Very well Chancellor," as he and Yoda stood and filed out of the office. Once they were gone, Palpatine smiled evilly. Were they that incompetent? They actually expelled their chosen one. The one Jedi he was worried about foiling his plans now that he was grounded in the light. The Jedi were going to make this easier on him than he thought...

Padme yawned and sipped at her caf.

"Is that your new saber?" Padme asked, as she watched her husband tinker with the tools that were strewn about on the table.

"Yeah, I'm almost finished. Just a few more adjustments and I'll be ready to try it out. Then we'll find out if I tuned the color matrix correctly to get the color I want," he replied Padme smiled and kissed his forehead, leaving him to play with his "toys." She retreated to the fresher to get ready for the first session. About an hour later, Padme and Dorme emerged from the bedroom chambers. Padme was clad in a senatorial gown and her hair was done up in twin buns on either side of her head.

"That's an interesting hairdo," Anakin smirked.

"Don't make fun of my hair," Padme retorted playfully.

"I'm not. You look beautiful, you always do," he replied, wrapping his arms around her waist. She kissed him tenderly for a long moment.

"Stay out of trouble today," she told him. He quirked his eyebrow.

"Me?" he questioned.

"Yes you," she replied. He chuckled.

"Don't worry, Artoo and I are going to work on the cruiser. We need to make sure it's in tip top shape for our trip home to Naboo in a couple months," he told her. She smiled, as kissed him again before

she left with Dorme. Her first order of business before the first senate session began would be her discussion with Queen Apilana.

Barriss and Zara were admitted to the Chancellor's office.

"Good morning Chancellor," Barriss said, as she and Zara bowed.

"Good morning master Offee, padawan Caelan," Palpatine greeted.

"Zara will accompany you to the Senate chambers, while I go check with security. I shall join you shortly," Barriss said, as she bowed and left the office.

"Padawan Caelan, I've heard much about you. Your masters tell me you are very gifted," Palpatine said.

"Thank you your excellency," she replied.

"It is a shame about Skywalker. I could have seen the both of you making a great team of Jedi Knights someday," Palpatine said. Anger and jealously swirled inside her. Palpatine smiled evilly, his back turned to her.

"Zara, you seem a little upset," Palpatine said. The young woman blanched.

"I'm sorry sir. Anger is very unbecoming of a Jedi," she replied.

"Don't be sorry young one. It is only natural to feel angry when you feel betrayed," Palpatine continued.

"Am I right?" he asked.

"Yes sir," she replied quietly.

"Anger is a normal reaction to such a situation. Come now, we had better be on our way for the first session," Palpatine said. Zara nodded and left with him.

The Twi'lek reporter stared at the datapad of information in disbelief. This information had just been delivered anonymously to them this morning, delivered by an unmarked carrier droid. The information… well it was almost too astounding to believe. The marriage between a Jedi and a Senator…and not just any Jedi or any Senator. This was the biggest piece of news in centuries and she was about to break the story wide open. She thought nothing of what it would do to the lives of the two people she was about to destroy, but only for the fame, fortune, and recognition it would bring to her career. She couldn't wait to get this to her editor…

Utapau

"It won't long before the Republic tracks us down here. I am sending you to the Mustafar system in the outer rim. It is a volcanic planet, you will be safe there. Your ship is waiting," Grevious told the separatist leaders, as Obi-Wan listened from above. Removing his cloak, Obi-Wan Force jumped down to Grevious' level.

"Hello there," Obi-Wan said.

"General Kenobi, you're a bold one. Kill him!" Grevious ordered his droid guards. Obi-Wan ignited his saber. Using the Force, he unclamped a mechanical fixture from the ceiling and it fell on two guards. Grevious halted his guards.

"I'll take care of this Jedi slime myself," the General told them.

"Your move," Obi-Wan replied.

"You fool. I've been trained in your Jedi arts by Count Dooku," Grevious sneered. The droid general removed his cloak. His two arms split in half creating a total of four, each with a lightsaber in the hand. He ignited the four sabers and began spinning two of them rapidly, while dragging the others on the ground, creating sparks everywhere. Finally, his four sabers clashed with Obi-Wan's. Obi-

Wan flipped over the General's head and came around, slicing off one of his hands and destroying one of the sabers. The General came back at Obi-Wan and the saber spar continued, until Obi-Wan successfully disarmed Grevious of another saber. At that moment Obi-Wan's clone battalion infiltrated the base and began taking out the droids.

"You must realize that you are doomed," Grevious growled.

"Oh I don't think so," Obi-Wan replied. The Jedi Force pushed the general off the catwalk. Grevious landed on his hands and feet and decided it was time to flee. Obi-Wan gave chase, not intending for the General to escape again. Unfortunately, along the way on the rough terrain, Obi-Wan lost his saber, but kept going.

"Blast! Another saber. At least Anakin isn't here, he'd never let me live it down," Obi-Wan said to himself. Though Obi-Wan did wish that he had his brother here to help him right now. Obi-Wan managed to catch up to Grevious on his landing pad. Grabbing one of the weapons Grevious' guards had been armed with, he engaged in hand to hand combat with the General. Obi-Wan found out that hitting or kicking the General was just as painful as being hit or kicked by him. The general threw Obi-Wan over the ledge of the landing pad. As Grevious approached, Obi-Wan hung onto the ledge. Using the Force, he brought the blaster to him. He shot the General several times in the chest, destroying what little organic substance he had. What was left of General Grevious fell to the ground in a heap of flames.

Obi-Wan pulled himself up and tossed the blaster away.

"So uncivilized," Obi-Wan scoffed. Moving quickly, Obi-Wan made his way back to his Jedi star fighter and began the trip back to Coruscant.

"Good morning your majesty," Padme greeted, as Queen Apilana's hologram floated in front of her.

"Greetings Senator Amidala. You message said that you wished to speak with me about a very important matter," the queen replied. Padme nodded and took a deep breath, before telling the queen her whole story. When Padme was finished, she waited patiently for the queen to respond.

"This is...a very big surprise. Jedi are forbidden to marry and I'm not surprised that the council expelled Anakin," Apilana said.

"I know your majesty and if you ask for my resignation, I will give it to you. But I have been serving my planet while being married to Anakin for the past three years. He is no longer a Jedi and so it is no longer forbidden," Padme argued.

"Yes, I realize that. Anyone else, I probably would ask for a resignation, but you have served us loyally for years. I will allow you to continue to serve if that is what you wish. And I will also grant your request for a six month maternity leave," Apilana said. Padme smiled.

"Thank you your majesty. Anakin and I are both grateful for your lenience and understanding.

"I bid you farewell Amidala. I look forward to seeing you once you and your husband return to Naboo," Apilana said, as the hologram faded. Padme sighed in relief. That had gone a lot better than she thought it would. Suddenly, there was a knock at her door.

"Come in," Padme said, as she shuffled through datapads.

"Senator Amidala, hard at work, as usual," a female voice said. Padme's head shot up.

"Sabe! " she exclaimed. Padme stood up and hugged her old friend.

"How are you?" Padme asked.

"I'm doing well and I've heard you are well also. You went and married little Ani Skywalker," Sabe teased.

"Where did you hear that?" Padme asked.

"Relax, Anakin contacted me yesterday. He told me everything and thought it would be a nice surprise for me to come see you. He said you could use a good surprise," Sabe said.

"That wonderful, thoughtful, adorable man. I'd kiss him if he were here. I'm just sorry that I have Senate sessions all day," Padme said.

"That's all right, I'll come with you and then we can catch up tonight. I only met your husband through hologram. I must say I didn't recognize him," Sabe said.

"Well, you didn't expect him to be a little boy anymore, did you?" Padme teased.

"No, I guess not, but it was still a shock. You do know how to pick cute ones," Sabe teased, as they left her office.

Typho, Dorme, and her security flanked them, as she headed for the Senate chambers. She thought the extra guards were unnecessary, but Anakin insisted upon it.

"So, how have you been handling all this?" Sabe asked seriously. Padme sighed.

"Not as well as I would like to be. I fell apart that night after our meeting with the council. Ani's been so strong for me and Obi-Wan has been supporting us," Padme mentioned. Sabe smiled slightly at the mention of Obi-Wan Kenobi.

"Well, it's good to know that Obi-Wan has chosen friends over the code," Sabe replied.

"We're grateful to him, but we don't want him to get in trouble with the council for supporting us," Padme replied. Sabe scoffed.

"Well, I heard that Obi-Wan is on Utapau facing that awful General Grevious," Sabe replied.

"Yes, I could tell Anakin was worried about him," Padme mentioned, as they continued their trek to the Senate chambers.

Coruscant; late afternoon

Obi-Wan landed his star fighter on the landing pad back at the temple. He checked his chrono and realized that Master Yoda and Master Windu would probably still be at the Senate session. It was very late in the afternoon, so he may be able to catch them as the sessions were ending.

The Senate session ended and Padme was making her way out. Suddenly, there was a commotion outside the Senate chambers. Holocams flashed at her and reporters began firing questions.

"Senator Amidala, is it true that you are married to a Jedi?" she heard, followed by several other personal and rather inappropriate questions including things about her pregnancy. How did they find out? Who told them? Padme wondered in horror. Just then, she saw Obi-Wan pushing his way through.

"Obi-Wan, how did they find out. The council wouldn't let something like this out, would they?" Padme asked.

"No Padme, they did not find out from the council. I'm not sure how they found out, but I just commed Anakin. He is on his way," Obi-Wan said, placing his hand on her shoulder. As he said that, many reporters were being shoved aside, as Anakin made his way through. The reporters realized who he was and began firing questions at him. He ignored them and made his way to Padme.

"I don't know how they found out Ani," Padme said.

"It's all right, let's just go home. We'll figure this out," Anakin said, as he took her hand in his.

Holocams flashed and holonet reporters fired questions so fast that the sound of them all blending together began to sound like a whirring sound inside Padme's ears. She and Anakin both had their eyes adverted from the obtrusive people and their cameras. Anakin had his arm wrapped protectively around her waist, as he led her into the turbo lift. There were a few moments of silence, as the turbo lift took them up to the apartment. Obi-Wan and Sabe said nothing to the young couple who stood behind them. Once the lift reached the top floor, the group exited again, only to be assaulted once again by a different set of reporters. The group hastily entered Padme's apartment, leaving the various holonet reporters scrambling and yelling through the door.

"Who would do this to us Ani? Who would have leaked this information to the holonet in such a vicious manner?" Padme cried. Anakin wrapped her arms around her.

"I don't know Padme. I'm so sorry I ever let any of this happen," Anakin said.

"Oh Ani, it's not your fault. None of this is," Padme said.

"Padme is right Anakin. Whoever did this must have some kind of grudge against Padme or you. They did this to hurt you both," Sabe said.

"Padme, are there any senators that you've had conflict with?" Obi-Wan asked. Padme gave him a half smile.

"Obi-Wan, I have too many enemies in the Senate to name. Chancellor Palpatine promised that our marriage would not be revealed to the entire Senate body, as he believed it had not effected my performance in the Senate. I do not know how the information got to the holonews," Padme replied.

"Most of the masters do not like me, but I don't believe they would do something like this," Anakin said. Obi-Wan nodded in agreement. Padme wiped a few tears and suddenly felt a huge pain in her abdomen.

"OH," Padme cried, clutching her stomach.

"Padme, what is it?" Anakin asked, as he held her up.

"She's having contractions," Sabe said.

"But it's much too early!" Anakin panicked.

"Oh Ani, it hurts," Padme said, as she doubled over in pain.

"We need to get her into bed and we need to get a healer here," Sabe ordered. Anakin picked Padme up in his arms and carried her to the bedroom, while Obi-Wan turned on his comlink.

"Offee," her voice chimed through his comlink.

"Barriss, we need your help," Obi-Wan said.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Senator Amidala just started having contractions. We need a healer here immediately," Obi-Wan said. There was silence on the other end.

"Please Barriss. Anakin is still your friend and his wife needs your help," Obi-Wan said.

"Zara and I will be right there," Barriss replied. Obi-Wan shut off the comlink and walked toward the bedroom.

Master Yoda sat in a deep, secluded meditation. Darkness swirled around him and his fellow Jedi. The darkness clouded the future, making it impossible to see. But there was a welcome change as of

late. No longer was the darkness clouding the future of the Chosen One. The force allowed him to see brief glimpses of Skywalker's happiness with his family. Could they have made an error in judgment? The future of the Chosen One was no longer clouded, yet his path still seemed tied to not only his family, but the Jedi as well. Should they allow Skywalker's attachment? Anakin claimed that it was the will of the Force that he and Padme were together. Was the boy right? Yoda wondered.

"The Force has revealed these things to you. But now you must trust in it and reshape the order," a ghostly voice said.

"Master Qui-Gon. Found the path to immortality you have," Yoda replied, as he stared at the ghostly silhouette of the deceased Jedi.

"Yes, I've been watching for sometime now. The Jedi order is destroying itself," Qui-Gon revealed.

"Difficult changes these are Master Qui-Gon. Divided on Skywalker the council already is. Divide us more this will," Yoda said.

"Anakin is the Chosen One master. But he was not just chosen to destroy the Sith," Qui-Gon revealed.

"Reckless and angry Skywalker has always been, until recently," Yoda pointed out.

"Yes, Padme has done what the Jedi couldn't. She has grounded him in the light. Because of her, he has not fallen. Had she not discovered the Sith plot to turn Anakin, he would have fell to the dark side. And the council would have held a great amount of responsibility in pushing him there. Not trusting him and shunning him only pushed him away from the Jedi, thus allowing him to be manipulated by the Sith. But Padme has saved him from that terrible fate. But the Sith will find another and the Jedi order is still in grave danger master," Qui-Gon replied, as he faded into the Force, leaving master Yoda to meditate further on what he had said.

Suddenly, Yoda felt a ripple in the force around the Skywalker's. He hobbled up and exited his chambers, heading for the landing pad.

Blazing a New Path

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AN: Here's chapter 7! Thanks for all the great reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 7: Blazing a New Path

Barriss placed her hands on Padme's belly and reached into the Force, trying to sense what was going on. Anakin impatiently paced at the foot of the bed and Obi-Wan had to resist the urge to smack his former padawan upside his head. Right now, he was more concerned about Padme's condition and the unusual, distant frown on padawan Caelan's face. Her moody disposition was concerning him a bit and he was sure that Barriss had noticed her padawan's demeanor.

"Is she okay Barriss. It's too early for her to be in labor, isn't it?" Anakin asked, as he ran a hand through his shaggy blonde hair. Barriss opened her eyes and smiled gently at Padme. The female Jedi had been using her healing gifts to determine Padme's condition. But when she went into the meditative healing trances, she could also sense other things about people. Padme was a good woman, she could truly see that now. She had sensed the intense feelings of love that the Senator held for Anakin and her unborn children. She had been wrong to be so harsh to them both.

"The pain is subsiding. Padme is not in labor," Barriss reported.

"Then why the contractions?" Obi-Wan questioned.

"She was just having what are known as Braxton-Hicks contractions, or false contractions. Usually they occur in the first trimester of pregnancy, but the can occur in the second. They simulate the pain

of real contractions, because of the tightening of the uterine walls," Barriss explained.

"So she and the babies are all right?" Anakin asked. Barriss smiled.

"Yes Anakin, they're all fine. It is likely that this was caused by stress, for it can be the worst enemy to a pregnant woman. I know that a lot of what has happened lately has put you under a lot of stress Padme, and I didn't make it any easier. I want to apologize to you both for the way I treated you," Barriss said. Anakin and Padme both smiled and nodded.

"Master, you can't actually be apologizing to them! The Senator is the one who should apologize for taking Anakin away from us!" Zara yelled.

"Control your temper padawan! Wait outside for me. Once we get back to the temple, we are going to have a very long talk," Barriss chided her padawan. Zara huffed and stormed out of the room.

"I apologize for my padawan's outburst," the knight said.

"It's all right Barriss. Thank you for coming and helping me," Padme said.

"You're welcome Senator," Barriss replied.

"Please call me Padme," she replied. Barriss nodded with a smile, then left the room.

"You gave us quite a scare," Obi-Wan said. Padme smiled.

"I'm sorry Obi-Wan," Padme replied.

"It's quite all right. Just make sure you tell my God children that is a little early for their arrival," Obi-Wan replied. Anakin smiled and caressed her stomach.

"You hear that you two? Uncle Obi-Wan says that it's not quite time yet, so you better listen to him, okay?" Anakin told them. Obi-Wan chuckled.

"Yes, listen to me just like your father always did," Obi-Wan replied sarcastically. Anakin smiled sheepishly. Suddenly, they heard the door chime, signifying someone was here.

"Sabe and I'll see who it is to give you both a few minutes alone," Obi-Wan said, as he and Sabe exited.

Anakin kissed her cheek, as he hugged her close.

"I'm fine Ani," she said, seeing the worried look in his eye.

"I know, and to ensure that, I think we should go back to Naboo early. Jar Jar can take over your duties early," Anakin said.

"Ani, I can't leave now. Obi-Wan said Grevious is dead and I have to be here to help the Republic recover from this war," Padme protested.

"Will you think about yourself for once?" he argued.

"I am, I promise. Besides, if I don't show up in the Senate, my enemies will think they've won by pushing me out of office. They are going to call for my resignation and I'm going to fight them all the way," she replied.

"Well, I don't think it's safe so I'll be accompanying you as part of your security," he told her. She eyed him curiously.

"You're going to sit through Senate sessions all day?" she asked skeptically.

"If it means protecting you, then I would do anything," he replied. She smiled at him.

"You're too sweet, my handsome Jedi protector," Padme said, as she kissed him softly.

"I'm not a Jedi anymore," Anakin replied.

"You'll always be my handsome, sexy, Jedi protector," Padme giggled playfully.

"Sexy huh?" he asked, raising his eyebrow.

"Very," she replied, as she kissed him passionately, the intensity building between them.

"Wow, what was that for?" Anakin asked with a smiled.

"Because I love you silly. And it was very sweet of you to call Sabe for me. It's so good to see her again," Padme replied.

"I'd do anything for you angel," Anakin said, kissing the back of her hand.

"I know and I feel like the luckiest woman in the galaxy," Padme said.

"Well, that surely makes me the luckiest man in the galaxy, being married to an angel of course. So, care to show me how sexy you think I am?" he replied, giving her his best sexy grin.

"Ani, we have guests in the other room," Padme chided. Anakin smirked and kissed her passionately. Padme moaned into the kiss.

"Later then?" he grinned, as he watched her eyes flutter open.

"Um...very possible," she replied. Anakin stood up and helped her up. Hand in hand, they left for the sitting room to greet whoever their new guest was.

"Master Yoda," Anakin greeted, with a respectful bow.

"To what do we owe this pleasure master Yoda?" Padme asked.

"Felt a disturbance in the Force I did. Warms my heart is does to see that you and your younglings are safe," Yoda replied.

"Thank you for your concern master," Anakin replied.

"Yes, thank you master Yoda. It was only a case of false contractions. I feel much better now," Padme replied.

"Strong with the Force your younglings will be, but wrong it would be to take them from you against your will. Vote for that action, I will not," Yoda assured them.

"Thank you master, we are grateful for that," Anakin said.

"Speak with you I would like to master Kenobi," Yoda said.

"Of course master," he replied, as the two Jedi masters went out to the veranda.

"I must say, I am a bit surprised by your stance master. You have always upheld the code," Obi-Wan said.

"Part of the problem that may have been. Clouds everything the dark side does. For so long, refused to truly listen to the Force we have. Made us arrogant it has and passed it down to our padawans we did. Invincible the Jedi are not, proven that this war has. Sure of one thing I am though," Yoda said.

"What's that master?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Tied to Padme, Anakin's path is. Listened to the Force and his heart Anakin did, when he married Padme. Much courage they have for listening to their hearts. The chosen one, Anakin is," Yoda stated.

"I agree with you master. I am just puzzled at your sudden change on Anakin," Obi-Wan said. Yoda smiled.

"Meditated on this heavily I have the last few days," Yoda said before chuckling.

"Visited me through the Force, your old master did. Knocked some sense into me he did," Yoda chuckled. Obi-Wan's eyes became wide as saucers.

"Qui-Gon?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Yes. And teach you to see him as well, I will," Yoda replied.

"Dark times these are Obi-Wan. Adapt and accept change we must, or destroyed we may be," Yoda said.

"Do you think the other council members will agree?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Some yes, others no. An uphill battle this will be. Blazing a new path for Jedi, Anakin is," Yoda said.

"Yes, leave it to Anakin to blaze his own path. I wish we knew how the Holonet found out about Anakin and Padme's marriage. The way it was done was vicious," Obi-Wan said.

"Should have been allowed to reveal it herself. Behind this, the Sith must be," Yoda said.

"The Sith?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Revenge is the way of the Sith. Very angry the dark Lord must be at losing a possible apprentice like Anakin. Hurt them he wishes to," Yoda said.

"I hope you don't mind master. I gave Anakin a crystal to build another saber with," Obi-Wan said.

"Best that is. Protect his family he must. Encourage him to keep up with his exercises you will," Yoda replied. Obi-Wan nodded, as he

and the ancient Jedi master went back inside. Yoda bid everyone farewell and headed back to the temple.

"I should be returning to the temple as well," Obi-Wan said.

"Why don't you join the three of us for dinner, master?" Anakin suggested.

"I don't want to impose," Obi-Wan replied. Anakin rolled his eyes.

"You're never imposing master," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan smiled.

"If you insist," he replied.

"We insist. Besides our children's godfather should catch up with our children's godmother," Padme said, pointing to Sabe.

After a wonderful dinner, the four retired to the sitting room. Not long after that, Dorme came in the room.

"Milady, I'm sorry to interrupt, but there was a holo message left for you earlier...from your parents and sister," Dorme said. Padme sighed.

"My guess is that they've already seen the holonews," Padme said, putting her hands over her face. Anakin put his hand on her shoulder.

"I didn't want them to find out this way Ani," Padme said.

"I know angel. I'll be right there with you though," he told her. She smiled and hugged him.

"Sabe and I will go out and talk on the veranda and give you two some time with them," Obi-Wan said, as he and Sabe left. Anakin and Padme made their way over to the desk by the far wall where the holo imager was mounted. Padme took a deep breath, before

activating the holoscreen. The images of Jobal, Ruwee and Sola Naberrie appeared before them.

"So, it's been a long time Jedi Kenobi," Sabe said, with a smile.

"Please milady, you don't have to be so formal. We are old friends after all," Obi-Wan replied.

"Okay Obi-Wan, as long as you drop that milady poodoo," Sabe replied.

"Very well Sabe," Obi-Wan replied, with a smile.

"You look well Obi-Wan, it is so good to see you again," Sabe said.

"Yes, it is good to see you again too. I'm also glad that you're here for Padme," Obi-Wan said.

"Me too. And I must say that it takes a lot of courage for you stand by Anakin like you are," Sabe admired.

"Well, I wouldn't be a very good brother if I didn't. Besides, master Yoda says times are changing," Obi-Wan said.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Let's just say that Anakin is blazing a new path for Jedi. One day, they may be free to love and have attachment," Obi-Wan replied. Sabe suppressed a light gasp.

"That's wonderful," she replied, with a smile. Obi-Wan gazed over at her and couldn't help notice the way Coruscant's moonlight reflected off her hair, making it look like silk.

"Yes, I think it is," he replied, as he turned back to look at the stars.

"Oh Padme, we've been so worried. There are all kinds of things about you all over the holonews," Jobal said frantically.

"I'm okay mother," Padme insisted

"They said you were captured by Count Dooku. And now they're saying your married to a Jedi," Ruwee said.

"Anakin and I did not want any of you to find out this way. We were planning to tell you when we came home next month," Padme told them.

"So it's true?" Ruwee questioned.

"Yes sir. Padme and I have been married for three years," Anakin stated.

"We fell in love when he was protecting me and we married in secret," Padme finished. Jobal and Ruwee gaped at them, while Sola beamed, giving them both an "I knew it" look.

"You're coming home next month?" Jobal asked hopefully. Padme nodded.

"Anakin and I are having twins. I'll be entering my 7th month soon and we'll be coming as I near my 8th month," Padme told them.

"Your pregnant?" Jobal asked with a smile. Padme smiled back.

"Yes," Padme reiterated.

"What about you Anakin? The Jedi don't allow this sort of thing," Ruwee asked.

"No sir, they don't. The Jedi have asked me to choose between them and Padme and I have chosen Padme. I love your daughter, she's everything to me and I will not leave her," Anakin told her father. Ruwee seemed satisfied with that answer.

"We're so sorry we couldn't tell you sooner. We never expected it to come out like this. We're not even sure how the Holonet found out," Padme said.

"We just want you to be happy Padme," Jobal said.

"I am mom, you can be sure of that. Anakin and our babies are everything to me too," she replied.

"Are you planning on retiring from the Senate?" Jobal asked.

"I'm not sure yet. Now that the war is over, there are so many things to do," Padme replied.

"Oh Padme, when will you ever leave that life?" Jobal protested.

"Someday I will mom. Anakin and I aren't really sure what the future holds yet. Right now, we're just taking it one day at a time," Padme replied, as Anakin squeezed her shoulder affectionately. Jobal sighed and accepted her daughter's answer.

"I love you both mom and dad," Padme said.

"We love you too sweetie. I think Sola would like to talk to you for a while, so we'll be going," Ruwee said. Padme nodded. Anakin smiled, as he saw Sabe and Obi-Wan peek their heads in. He nodded, telling them it was okay. He turned back to Padme and kissed her tenderly.

"I'll let you talk to your sister. I think master Obi-Wan wants to speak with me," Anakin said. She smiled.

"Okay," she replied, before turning back to Sola.

"Wow little sister, he is...wow," Sola said. Padme giggled.

"He is handsome, isn't he?" Padme replied.

"Oh yeah, and I don't think you're the only one who thinks so. Some on the holonet are calling you the luckiest woman in the galaxy," Sola said.

"Well, I am the luckiest woman in the galaxy. But I'm not so sure I appreciate the holonet talking about my husband like he's a piece of shaak steak.

"Well, he certainly is a fine piece," Sola teased.

"Sola! You're married!" Padme scolded.

"I know, but you've deprived me of three years of teasing you. So prepare your self little sister, because you'll never live this whole secret marriage to your handsome Jedi protector business down!" Sola replied. Padme rolled her eyes, but giggled at her older sister's antics.

"Well, you look tired little sister. It can't be easy carrying twins, since I had enough trouble with just one at a time. Make sure that Jedi husband takes good care of you," Sola said.

"Oh believe me, he does," Padme replied.

"I love you and I can't wait to see you," Sola said.

"Me either Sola, I love you too," Padme replied, as her hologram faded out.

Padme felt a pair of strong arms wrap around her from behind. His lips kissed along the nape of her neck softly.

"You okay?" he asked. She turned in his embrace.

"Yeah, I feel a lot better now that I've talked to them. I didn't realize that I missed them so much," she replied. Anakin smiled and kissed her lips softly.

"Did Obi-Wan leave?" Padme asked.

"Yeah, he needed to get back to the temple. Sabe went to bed too. They both told me to tell you goodnight," he said. She smiled, and kissed him passionately.

"I love you so much Ani," Padme said, as she rested her head against his chest.

"I love you too angel," he replied. Their lips met again in a searing kiss. Padme looked up into his dark blue eyes desperately. Anakin stared back at her, before moving his lips down her neck sending soft chills up her spine.

"Make me forget Ani, make me forget all the terrible things that happened today," Padme whispered, her soft breath on his lips. Anakin kissed her hungrily, conveying his own need for her, as he lifted her into his arms and carried her to their bedroom...

Shroud of Darkness, Ray of Light

Disclaimer: I don't own Star Wars. It all belongs to LFL.

AN: Hi everyone! Here's chapter 8! Thanks for all the great comments and reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 8: Shroud of Darkness, Ray of Light

Padme's eyes fluttered open, and she was met by the gaze of her husband.

"Morning angel," he smiled.

"Morning Ani," she replied, as she rested her head atop his chest and breathed in his familiar scent.

"I wish we could stay like this all day," Padme said.

"Well...we could. All you have to do is call Jar Jar and have him fill in for you," Anakin replied.

"As nice as that sounds Ani, I can't. There will be much to discuss in the Senate today now that Grevious is dead. We have to apprehend the remaining separatist leaders," Padme replied.

"Well, I think you should still be resting. As for the separatists, Nute Gunray will hide like the coward he is I'm sure," Anakin replied.

"Jar Jar, Bail, Mon Mothma, and some of the others will be here soon. We're having a short briefing before today's sessions," Padme said, as she shuffled out of bed. She threw her robe on and headed for the fresher. Anakin was right behind her. She stopped at the door, as Anakin lips continued to find their way long the back of her heck.

It was amazing how all her concentration seemed to fly out the window when he kissed her.

"What are you doing?" she asked playfully.

"Me? Oh, I just thought you might want some help in the shower," he replied with a grin.

"Hmmm...that sounds wonderful," she replied, as she pulled him into the fresher with her.

The door chimed and Dorme let the guests in.

"Ani! Meesa so happy to see yousa!" Jar Jar said, as he hugged Anakin.

"Ooof...it's good to you too Jar Jar," Anakin replied.

"Yousa bein married to Senator Padme is a muy muy surprise. Yousa lookin' so happy together!" Jar Jar replied excitedly.

"Yes, we didn't exactly expect any of you to find out the way you did," Padme told her guests.

"It's okay Padme. We understand why you both had to keep it a secret. I for one, never did understand that no attachment rule the Jedi have. Love is a wonderful thing," Bail said, extending his hand to Anakin. Anakin smiled and shook it graciously. He knew that Bail thought of Padme as a younger sister and it was nice to have his support.

"Thank you Senator Organa," Anakin replied.

"Please Anakin, call me Bail," the senator replied. Padme led her guests to the sitting room where they began their committee meeting.

Master Yoda and Master Windu sat in Chancellor Palpatine's office.

"Now that General Grevious is dead, we implore you to release your emergency powers," Mace said.

"Forgive me master Windu, but I disagree. Until all the separatist leaders are captured, this war is not over," Palpatine argued.

"Yes, but they will soon be captured. Therefore, there is no more need for you to hold emergency powers," Mace replied.

"Do you even know where they are hiding?" Palaptine questioned. Mace and Yoda exchanged glances.

"Obi-Wan overheard that they were going to the Mustafar system before he killed the general. But not that has changed," Mace said.

"So, you lost track of them?" Palpatine asked knowingly.

"Only for now Chancellor. Master Unduli and Knight Offee have been assigned to track them and then pinpoint them. Once they can find them, they will be arrested. Padawan Caelan will continue to maintain your security," Mace replied.

"I'm sorry then Master Windu, but until they are in custody, I cannot feel confident about releasing my emergency powers," the Chancellor replied. Mace and Yoda nodded respectively and then saw themselves out. About that time, Padawan Caelan reported to the Chancellor before the day of Senate sessions was about to begin.

The senate was in uproar this morning. Many Senators, those most loyal to Palpatine, were demanding for Padme's resignation. Others defended her, saying that her personal life should not be on display. Anakin watched silently from the balcony above the body of the Senate. He watched his beautiful wife rebuke their responses with that same fire he fell in love with. He did not care for the way some

of these slimy politicians were speaking to her, but as always, she was proving that she was perfectly capable of defending herself. So, he was content to just be there and offer her the silent support of his presence. Later at home, he would be there to pull her into his arms and assure her that everything would be okay.

"The senate recognizes Senator Organa from the sovereign system of Alderaan," Mas Amedda announced.

"We should set aside Senator Amidala's personal life and discuss more pressing matters, such as the ending of this war. Chancellor Palpatine, as speaking representative of the delegation of 2000, we ask that you set aside your emergency powers and allow democracy to resume," Bail said.

"I'm sorry Senator Organa, but until the Separatist leaders are brought to justice, this war still exists. I cannot feel confident about giving up emergency powers until the Jedi have tracked them down," Palpatine said.

"Master Yoda and Master Windu assure me that it will not be long," Bail argued.

"Once they are captured, I will release my emergency powers. But not before then," Palpatine said, ending the debate. The session droned on, brining many other topics up for discussion.

"Chancellor Palpatine has refused to give up his emergency powers," Mace informed the council.

"Master Unduli, have you and knight Offee made any progress in finding the separatist leaders?" Ki-Adi Mundi asked. Luminara, who was attending the council meeting by hologram responded.

"Not yet, I'm afraid. The leaders of the separatists have covered their tracks well. You don't think the dark Lord has found a new apprentice yet, do you?" Luminara asked.

"Not yet, I do not think. But many agents of evil, the dark Lord has. May have employed one to see to the escape of the separatist leaders in order to continue the war, he could have," Yoda said.

"Chancellor Palpatine has been in office for over three terms. He must give up his emergency powers so elections for a new chancellor can begin. We would have to take temporary control of the Senate in order to do this however," Mace said.

"To a dark and dangerous place this takes us," Yoda warned.

"Yes, many in the Senate are already untrusting of us," Kit Fisto added.

"Yes, Skywalker and Amidala have not helped that situation at all," Mace said bitterly.

"Blame them you must not, Mater Windu. Believe I do, that it is the will of the Force that they are together," Yoda revealed.

"Master Yoda, you can't seriously be siding with Skywalker," Adi Gallia protested. Mace Windu was silent, but it was clear that he would be speaking with Yoda alone.

"We shall discuss this more tomorrow. For now, we are adjourned," Mace announced. The council members began filing out.

"Stay and speak with us you will Obi-Wan," Yoda requested.

"Obi-Wan nodded and sat back down.

"Much to discuss we have master Windu," Yoda said.

"Yes, apparently we do," Windu remarked icily. Obi-Wan winced inwardly. Master Windu was not going to like what Master Yoda had to say.

"Why have you sided with Skywalker all the sudden? It is best that we expelled him," Mace said.

"Believe that, I do not anymore," Yoda replied. Mace blinked a few times.

"I don't understand your change master. He broke the code and in the worst way! He is far too emotional and attached to be a true Jedi," Mace replied.

"Thinks differently, an old friend of ours does. Convinced me that Anakin is the chosen one, he has," Yoda said.

"Who is this friend you speak of?" Mace asked.

"Found the path to immortality, master Qui-Gon has. Visited me through the Force he did a few nights ago. Blazing a new path for the Jedi, Anakin is. Change we must embrace and accept, lest wish to be destroyed, we do," Yoda stated.

"Qui-Gon has always believed in the boy. I do not think he is in a position to be objective when it comes to Anakin," Mace argued.

"Forgive me master, but I believe that Qui-Gon is in a very objective position. He's been watching over all us these past years, especially Anakin. Master Yoda said that he was very worried about Anakin's path until Padme saved him from the dark side," Obi-Wan replied.

"What changes are you suggesting, master Yoda?" Mace asked.

"Discuss this with the rest of the council, we will. Perhaps time it is to make revisions to the code," Yoda suggested.

"Change the code? Allow attachment! I'm sorry master, but that is something that I will not support. It will destroy the order!" Mace yelled.

"Calm yourself you must, master Windu," Yoda said. Mace sighed and closed his eyes, reaching deeply into the Force to release the negative emotions.

"Forgive me master, but I do not agree with this. Nor will many other members of the council. I'm afraid you may be outvoted. Now, if you'll excuse me," Master Windu said, as he got up and left the council chambers.

"That did not go very well," Obi-Wan sighed.

"Present our case to the council, we will. Let the Force guide us from there, we will," Yoda instructed. Obi-Wan nodded and got up to leave. Yoda hobbled up and left for his quarters to do some meditating.

The clawdite assassin stared down at the dead female Jedi padawan and her dead master. Zeel Wesell, younger sister to the deceased Zam Wesell, extinguished her blood red saber.

For the last two years, she had been training as an assassin for Darth Sidious. Trained by Count Dooku, she was informed by the Sith that her midichlorian count was not high enough to become a full fledged Sith apprentice. But her shape shifting abilities had proven to invaluable to the dark Lord and she was well compensated. Under Count Dooku's tutelage, she had learned how to study her victims in order to properly emulate their force signatures, which was needed in order to fool the Jedi. Dooku had also taught her to perfect her shape shifting abilities so that she was able to hold any form she desired for as long as she needed.

Darth Sidious had given her the ultimate task now. She had been assigned to observe Jedi Padawan Tia Ranier. Once she learned how to emulate her Force signature, she killed her and her master, and took on the padawan's identity. She was careful to cloak her presence around the padawan, as she died so that the Jedi would not sense it through the Force. They would sense the death of her master, but not the padawan. She burned the padawan's body to destroy any question against her true identity.

As for the master, she made sure she had struck her saber in dark places of the Jedi's dark brown cloak. Then, she took out her blaster and shot the body, making it appear that the Jedi Knight had been killed by droid enemy fire. She highly doubted that the council would want to inspect the body of another dead commrad. The would order her to give the body a proper funeral pyre and then return to the temple. Master Sidious had informed her that Tia was Zara Caelan's best friend. It was now her job to help the dark Lord to turn this girl away from the ways of the Jedi and towards the Sith. She knew her master was still furious for losing the prospect of turning Anakin Skywalker and she would not fail him in this assignment.

Curiously, she found out from her master that padawan Caelan had an infatuation with Anakin. It was now part of her job to turn that into obsession, and fuel her jealousy, anger and rage. Zara Caelan would turn, she would see to it. The clawdite changeling looked over her new form's reflection in the pond. She was an attractive human female about 20 years old with flaxen blonde hair and blue eyes. She stood rather tall and slender at 5'8. She placed the girl's yellow bladed saber on her belt and concealed her red bladed one away in her pack. Now all she had to do was contact the Council and get orders to return to the temple.

She was dreaming again. Dreaming again of the day that Anakin had saved her life in that horrible explosion. How he had carried her to the medical unit and sought medical attention for her. How he was there when she woke up. But then the dream took a turn to things that hadn't happened that day. She leaned up, trying to bring her lips to his, but she was horrified when he backed away from her.

" *No Zara, I don't love you. I love Padme," he told her coldly. As he said that, the senator appeared and wrapped her arms around Anakin. She leaned up, bringing her lips to his. He did not back away from her. In fact, he lowered his onto hers, moving them passionately over hers again and again. Jealousy boiled inside, as many dark thoughts against the Senator began to surface...*

Zara woke up with a start. She panted heavily and swiped the tears away from her eyes. He body was drenched in sweat. She sat up and contemplated her strange dream. Why in the world was she dreaming about things like this. Jedi were not supposed to be jealous and have wishes of harming another. But she wanted to hurt *her* . She wanted to hurt Senator Amidala for taking Anakin away. She knew it was wrong, but she hated the woman for it...

Inside his office, Supreme Chancellor Palpatine's eyes glowed sithly yellow, as he smiled evilly. His plans were working...

Padme, Anakin, and Sabe arrived home, flanked by Dorme, Typho and his security. Padme was exhausted, more than she usually was after a long day of Senate sessions. Obi-Wan was with them also, as he had come to see Anakin after his meeting with master Windu and master Yoda.

"Angel, are you okay?" Anakin asked, his voice lacing with concern.

"I'm fine Ani, my back is just killing me. And I think the twins are giving me bruises on the inside, they've been so active today," she replied, with a playful groan. Anakin chuckled and rubbed her shoulders.

"We're going to have our hands full when they get here. And I can't wait," he said. She smiled up at him.

"Me either. Sabe, I hope you'll forgive me, but I don't know if I feel up to going to the opera with you tonight. I know you had tickets and were looking forward to it, but..." Padme said. Sabe smiled at her best friend.

"Say no more Padme, you're seven months pregnant. I think you're allowed to not feel well. We can go another time," Sabe said.

"Master Obi-Wan loves the holo opera. Perhaps he could accompany you," Anakin interjected.

"How about it Obi-Wan?" Sabe asked.

"It has been a long time since I've been able to attend a showing. And I think I could use a little distraction after that dicey meeting I had with the masters earlier," Obi-Wan replied.

"Good, just give me a few moments to freshen up and we'll go," Sabe said. About a half hour later, Sabe and Obi-Wan left. Anakin dismissed Typho and the rest of the security, including Dorme, leaving them alone.

"Now milady, it's time that we did something for that back of yours," Anakin said.

"What did you have in mind, my Jedi protector?" she asked playfully.

"Well, you're going to get undressed and I'm going to massage all the kinks out," he replied. She giggled.

"Why Ani, I do believe you've found a new way to get me out of my clothes," she replie slyly. He gave her a crooked smile.

"Well, I really am going to give you a massage. It's just an added bonus that you won't be wearing anything when I do it," he replied, raising one eyebrow slyly. She giggled, as he led her into the bedroom. She went into the fresher and shed her senatorial gown. When she came back out, she was dressed just in a simple robe. Her husband had rid himself of his tunic and was now dressed in just a simple pair of black sleep pants. She walked over to him and feathered her fingers along his smooth, broad chest.

"So, how exactly is this going to work? Laying on my stomach isn't exactly the most comfortable thing nowadays," she replied.

"You're going to put a pillow under your belly and I'm going to use the Force to ease the rest of the tension," Anakin replied.

"Using the Force for this? I don't think master Obi-Wan would approve," she teased playfully. He chuckled, imagining the many lectures Obi-Wan had given him for using the Force for things other than toward his duty.

"Yeah, well, what master Obi-Wan doesn't know, won't hurt him," Anakin replied, as Padme giggled. Gingerly, she laid down on the bed, her belly resting on a pillow. She closed her eyes and relaxed. Anakin straddled her legs and reached around her, undoing the belt of her robe and pushing it down, fully exposing her back to him. He stared at her form for a long moment, truly taking in the beauty of every curve of her exquisite body. He leaned down and pressed soft, sensual kisses along the back of her neck and shoulder blades, before he moved his hands to the small of her back. He began to kneed at the tension and strain that was clearly evident under his fingertips.

"Oooh...Ani. Oh, that feels so amazing," she moaned softly, as his calloused hands moved up and down her back. He continued his sensual ministrations, until all the tension in her back disappeared. She rolled over underneath him, now facing him.

"Mmm...thank you so much Ani. I feel so much better now," she said.

"Anything for you, angel," he replied, as he leaned down and tenderly brushed his lips over hers. She snaked her arms around his neck and pulled him closer, deepening the kiss. She tugged at the drawstrings on his pants, as he kissed her deeply. Reaching into the Force, he turned out the lights...

Obi-Wan landed the speeder on Padme's veranda and helped Sabe out.

"Thank you for accompanying me Obi-Wan. I had a wonderful time," Sabe said.

"I did too milady. It's been a long time since I've enjoyed myself that much," Obi-Wan replied. Sabe stepped closer to Obi-Wan and kissed him lightly on the lips, catching the unsuspecting Jedi completely off guard. However, Obi-Wan was enjoying it too much to pull away. Sabe pulled back first and smiled at him.

"Sabe...I," Obi-Wan began, but she stopped him.

"I know Obi-Wan. I know you're strongly devoted to the code and I respect that. Just let me have this one kiss," she replied. Obi-Wan nodded mutely, as she went inside. Obi-Wan stood there for a few moments, not really sure what to do with himself.

"Blast!" he mumbled to himself. Everything he knew and trusted had somehow come into question lately. He wasn't like Anakin; he was devoted to the code, even though he had been questioning parts of it lately.

"Times are changing Obi-Wan," a ghostly voice said. Obi-Wan turned abruptly.

"M..Master!" Obi-Wan exclaimed. Qui-Gon's spirit chuckled at his former apprentice.

"Yes Obi-Wan, I'm really here," Qui-Gon answered.

"It's wonderful to see you master. I suppose you witnessed what just happened," Obi-Wan said.

"Yes I did Obi-Wan. And you know how I feel on these matters. The order is heading for a terrible fall if they don't accept change. The dark side has lost their grasp on Anakin, but it is still growing. The dark Lord will find someone to replace him. The Sith are very good at adapting to change in order to ensure their survival. Therefore, the Jedi must also. I'm counting on you and master Yoda to be my voice to the council," Qui-Gon said.

"But master, I'm not like Anakin. The code has been grounded into me, in all of us, since we were younglings," Obi-Wan said. Qui-Gon chuckled.

"No, you're not like Anakin. Force knows, the galaxy can only handle one Anakin. You have guided him through his training and he has become a fine young man. But on matters of the heart, Anakin will guide the order into a new era. He has released the shackles of the dark side and will truly fulfill his destiny as the Chosen One. But he needs you there with him the whole way, in order to be successful. For he will face many obsticles and adversaries along the path," Qui-Gon advised. Obi-Wan nodded, as Qui-Gon's spirit faded into the Force. Obi-Wan sighed and hopped back into his speeder, taking off for the temple.

Chancellor Palpatine smiled evilly, as he heard the small knock at his office door. She was right on time.

"Come in," he answered politely. Zara peeked in.

"I'm sorry to bother you at such a late hour chancellor, but I sensed that you were still here," Zara said.

"Don't be sorry child, come in, come in," the meek chancellor said.

"What's troubling you? Remember, I told you that you could talk to me about anything in the strictest of confidence. Nothing we say will leave this room," Palpatine said. Zara felt like she could really trust the old man. He gave her praises and advice. He did not chide her and scold her like the masters at the temple did.

"I had a nightmare of sorts that bothered me," she said, as she sat down.

"Tell me about it Zara. I want you to think that you talk to me. In the short time that you've been guarding me, I've come to see you as the daughter I never had," Palpatine said.

"Thank you sir, I'm honored you feel that way. I've been having dreams...about someone," she said.

"Let me guess, you've been dreaming of Anakin," Palpatine replied. Zara shot him a shocked expression.

"How...how did you know?" she asked.

"Oh come now dear, I'm an old man. I see the looks you toss his way. I've been around long enough to know what they mean," he said, with a friendly smile.

"I'm sorry sir, I know it's wrong for a Jedi to have these feelings," she hung her head in shame.

"Not at all child. It is very normal for a human to experience such emotions. Anakin himself broke the code for love," Palpatine replied.

"Yes, he loves the Senator," she said sadly.

"Yes that may be. But I've learned one thing in my life and that is to never give up on one's dreams. You never know what the future may hold," Palpatine advised.

"Yes, I can't help but be suspicious of her. Some of the masters say she saved him from the dark side," Zara said. That piece of information peeked Palpatine's interest immensely.

"How in the world did she do that?" he wondered innocently.

"She told the council that she found some encrypted information that someone in the Senate paid a bounty hunter to kidnap Anakin's mother and have her killed by Tuskan raiders," Zara replied, not really caring how much trouble she knew she'd be in if the council found out that she told anyone about anything they had discussed.

"That's absolutely horrible," Palpatine said, mock terror lacing his voice.

"Yes, they think the Sith are behind it and they were trying to turn Anakin to the dark side. I'm grateful to her for saving him if she really did, but some of the other padawans and I can't help but have ill feelings toward her. We feel like she stole Anakin from the order. He was our most promising and courageous Jedi Knight and now he has just left it all for her," Zara said, becoming frustrated.

"Well child, it is best for you to try and put it out of your mind for tonight and get some rest," Palpatine suggested.

"You're right chancellor. I feel much better after talking to someone about this. Thank you for not judging me," she replied.

"Of course my dear, you can always come to me. Good night," Palpatine said, as he saw her out. After she left, his eyes turned yellow as he bathed in the energy of her dark emotions. She was closer to becoming his with each passing day...

As for Amidala, he would deal with her and Skywalker in due time. They would both pay for nearly destroying thirteen years of his hard work. They would not keep him from realizing his dreams of his Empire...

Anakin's dream

It was pitch black and he couldn't see a thing. But he could sense something...something very wrong. Suddenly, a red saber ignited across from him, outlining a figure in a black cloak. And he could hear thousands of screams of innocents ringing in his ears...

He woke up with a start, his bare chest heaving as he gulped in oxygen to his starved lungs. What did the dream mean? He hadn't seen a face, but the screams of thousands of innocent people were real enough. It definitely had to do with the Sith and he would need to speak to Obi-Wan about it in the morning. Something just didn't feel right...he couldn't decide what it was, but he felt as if the dark side was growing stronger. He looked down at his side, where

Padme lay spooned against him, sleeping peacefully. Neither had been asleep long, their skin still damp with sweat from their earlier expression of love. He brushed the curls away from her face and kissed her cheek. Their lovemaking was fresh in his mind, her ardent, impassioned cries echoed in his ears. Her ragged breathes on his shoulder and her nails raking across his back, as he made love to her. He laid back down and scooted closer to her, taking her in his arms. Darkness was all around them, but he silently promised her that he would never let any harm come to her. Not as long as he still had breath in his body...

Friends Few and Far Between

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here.

AN: Here's chapter 9! Thanks for all the great reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 9: Friends Few and Far Between

It was later the next evening before Anakin and Obi-Wan found the time to talk.

"You mentioned earlier that you had a dream last night," Obi-Wan said, as they stepped out onto the veranda.

"Yes and before you tell me that dreams pass in time, let me say that this dream was different than any I've ever had," Anakin began. Obi-Wan nodded for him to continue.

"It was pitch black, I couldn't see anything. Then suddenly, a red lightsaber ignited. I could see the outline of a cloaked figure, but no face. Then I heard thousands of voices crying out in terror. That's when I woke up. I'll admit the dream doesn't make much sense," Anakin said. Obi-Wan stroked his beard thoughtfully.

"Do you think it could mean the Sith Lord has found a new apprentice?" Anakin asked.

"It's very possible. It is likely that the Sith Lord will try to replace Dooku sooner rather than later," Obi-Wan replied.

"I just wish we knew more," Anakin sighed. Obi-Wan patted him on the shoulder.

"We must trust in the Force and let it guide us," Obi-Wan replied.

"I see you've finished your new saber. Mind if I take a look?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Be my guest master," Anakin said with a smile, as he handed the weapon to him. Obi-Wan stepped back and pressed the igniter. A brilliant, silver blade blazed to life with a steady hum. Obi-Wan looked surprised, as he elegantly swung the weapon.

"You've done a fantastic job Anakin. And the color is very unique," Obi-Wan complimented.

"Thanks master. I was wondering if you could manage to get me another crystal? I'd like to have a back up," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan smiled.

"I'll see what I can do," Obi-Wan replied.

"So you seem to be feeling a lot better today," Sabe said, as they both sipped at their shuura juice.

"Yes, Anakin massaged all the knots out of my back last night," Padme replied, knowing that she was instantly going to regret it.

"Oh did he? I bet that's not all he did to you," Sabe smiled slyly.

"Sabe! You're as bad as Sola," Padme exclaimed. Sabe giggled.

"Well, I must be right, because you're blushing milady," Sabe replied. Padme sighed.

"Enough about me. How was your evening with Obi-Wan?" Padme asked.

"We had a nice time, but there's not much to tell," Sabe replied.

"Really? Because you look like you're dying to tell me something," Padme replied.

"Well…I sort of kissed him," Sabe confessed. Padme beamed.

"Really?" she gushed.

"Yes…and he kissed back," Sabe added, with a hint of sadness.

"What's wrong?" Padme asked.

"There will never be anything between us," Sabe replied.

"Don't say that. If you really love him…" Padme began. But Sabe cut her off.

"No Padme. Even if we both had mutual feelings, Obi-Wan would never act on them," Sabe replied.

"Unless they change the code," Padme said hopefully.

"I can't wait around the rest of my life wondering if they'll change the code," Sabe replied.

"Don't be too hard on him Sabe. The code is all he's ever known. Ani's different in that respect. He remembers his life before he was a Jedi and loving another comes naturally to him. If Obi-Wan does have feelings for you, then they are probably very confusing and even frightening to him. Take it slow with him," Padme advised. Sabe arched one eyebrow.

"Padme Amidala Skywalker, are you encouraging me to go after Master Kenobi?" Sabe asked playfully. Padme giggled.

"Strange huh? Ani is such a bad influence. Love makes us do such crazy things. I'm encouraging my best friend to do what it takes to be happy. If Master Windu found out that I told you to do that, he'd be even more convinced that I'm trying to destroy the order than ever," Padme half joked.

Two weeks later…

As expected, the meeting with the council was cut and dry. Master Windu offered condolences and then ordered Tia to return to the temple, after she had given her master a proper funeral. She did so and returned to the temple, playing the part of the grieving padawan perfectly. The last two weeks, she had spent in the healer's ward, which was routine for young padawan's ripped from their masters by the war. Many masters had come to talk and meditate with her and so far no one suspected that anything was off. She returned to her quarters briefly, before reporting for her next assignment. She would be guarding the Chancellor when Zara left on her assignment to Naboo in a couple days. She smiled evilly, as once again, her master had fooled the Jedi into going along with this plan. Her master's suggestion at assigning Zara to Amidala's security was a direct slap in Anakin's face. Skywalker would learn the hard way that defying the dark Lord would cost him dearly. The idiot had chosen that weak woman over unimaginable power and control. She smiled again and turned on the small hand held holo projector in her hand. It held a message from her master.

"You will disguise yourself differently and mask your Force signature for this next mission," Sidious began.

"Yes master, what will you have me do?" Zeel asked.

"As Senator Amidala and her entourage arrive at the Senate building this morning, you will attempt to assassinate her using a blaster," Sidious said.

"You want me to kill her?" she asked.

"No, you will try. Anakin will stop you and give chase. You must not let him catch you though," Sidious explained.

"I understand master, I will not fail you. But if I may ask, who are we going to cite blame to? It will be the first thing Anakin and Jedi want to know," Zeel pointed out.

"Ah yes, that is the beauty of this plan. It seems that some of Amidala's colleagues are upset that she has seemingly chosen her personal life over her duties to the Republic. They shall be the ones we set up as suspects. Anakin and Amidala will feel like they have next to no allies and we will make them pay..."

Anakin was once again escorting Padme to the Senate. Since his dream almost two weeks ago, he had felt very uneasy, especially in regards to Padme's safety. Suddenly, his senses were on fire. He whirled around, igniting his saber as he did, just in time to deflect several blaster shots from a faceless bounty hunter.

"Get her to cover!" Anakin yelled to Typho, as he took off after the fleeing bounty hunter. Anakin hopped into a speeder and chased the bounty hunter. Anakin followed the Force signature of the being, until suddenly, the life Force disappeared. He pulled the speeder over and sat for a moment, trying to find the signature. But it was gone. And he knew that only a Sith or at least someone trained in the Sith arts could mask their Force signature from a Jedi...

Anakin returned to the Senate rotunda frustrated and confused. The Senate was in uproar at the assassination attempt on Amidala, so the Chancellor dismissed the sessions for the day before they had even begun. Anakin whisked Padme away from the rabid holo-net reporters and home to their apartment. Padme attempted to choke back the sobs, as Anakin placed his hands on her shoulders. In his arms, she broke down crying.

"Why Ani? Why...is someone...always trying...to kill me?" she sobbed.

"Because you're a wonderful person who does so much good," Anakin replied, as he rocked her, while she sobbed into his chest.

"But...it's different this time. They could have...killed the...twins," Padme cried.

"No, I'll never let them harm you or our children, angel," Anakin assured her.

"It's time Ani, take me home. I want to go home," Padme sobbed. Anakin held her tightly, as her sobs began to lessen. He led her to the couch and gathered her in his arms. He heard her sobs begin to lessen and her breathing became steady. He smiled, realizing she had fallen asleep.

"Threepio," Anakin called softly.

"Yes master Ani?" Threepio asked obediently.

"Begin packing all our things. We're leaving for Naboo first thing in the morning," Anakin told him.

"Of course master Ani. I'll pack everything and load it all in the ship," Threepio replied.

"Thanks Threepio. Artoo, I want a full scan done on the ship in the morning. We have some very precious cargo and we need to make sure everything's in order," Anakin told him. Artoo beeped and clicked affirmatively.

Later that afternoon...

Anakin stepped in to Chancellor Palpatine's office.

"Anakin, it's so good to see you," Palpatine greeted.

"It is good to see you also sir," Anakin replied, with a respectful bow.

"I heard about that awful assassination attempt on Padme. I trust that she is all right?" Palpatine asked, concern lacing his voice.

"She's fine sir. I was able to sense the attack before they could shoot at her," Anakin replied.

"But I heard the assassin escaped?" Palpatine asked.

"He or she was a clawdite I believe and very good at masking her force signature," Anakin replied.

"That is unfortunate. I hear that you and Padme are returning to Naboo soon. It is a shame that you are not a Jedi anymore," Palpatine said.

"I respect the council's decision. And I am needed most at Padme's side. She is nearing her due date," Anakin replied.

"Yes, that is one of the reasons I called you here," Palpatine said.

"It would hurt me deeply if anything were to happen to you or Padme. With all this attention on your personal lives, I took the liberty of discussing this with the Jedi council. I believe that it would be a great asset for you to have a Jedi head up your wife's security. The council granted my request and assigned Zara Caelan to complete the mission. She will be traveling with you," Palpatine said. Anakin carefully hid his outrage. He calmly released his negative emotions into the Force.

"With all due respect Chancellor, I may no longer be a Jedi, but I am more than capable of taking care of my wife. We do not require Padawan Caelan's services," Anakin replied calmly.

"Oh son, I didn't mean to insult your abilities. I just believe that this way you would be allowed to focus all your attention on your lovely wife and feel confident that her safety is secure. Since Padme is still a member of the Senate, I must insist that you accept her help," Palpatine replied. Anakin grit his teeth.

"Very well Chancellor, good day," Anakin said. He left the office fuming. Once he left, Palptine smiled evilly.

"Everything is coming along perfectly," Palpatine said to himself...

Anakin stormed into the apartment he shared with Padme. He saw that Obi-Wan had arrived and was glad that he was there. He had some questions for his former master.

"Ani, what's wrong?" Padme asked, coming to him.

"Chancellor Palpatine and the Council have seen it fit to assign a Jedi to your security. They've assigned Zara to accompany us to Naboo until the twins are born and they believe you are out of danger," Anakin said angrily.

"What? Anakin, I don't need more security, I already have you. There's no one that I could ever feel more safe with. Plus, Captain Typho is heading up my security, as usual," Padme protested.

"I know, I tried to tell the Chancellor that we didn't need her, but he insisted," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan sighed.

"I'm sorry Anakin. For what it's worth, master Yoda and I protested the Chancellor's request for more security for Padme, but the majority of the council is convinced that it would be best until the twins are born," Obi-Wan said.

"They don't think I'm capable of taking care of my own family?" Anakin asked.

"I don't know what they think Anakin, but you know what I think," Obi-Wan replied. Anakin nodded, grateful to once again have Obi-Wan on his side.

"Why is the council so interested in the twins?" Anakin asked, knowing he wasn't going to like the answer. Obi-Wan winced. He really wished Anakin hadn't asked that question, but he had every right to know.

"They have…sensed that at least one or both of the twins…are very strong in the Force," Obi-Wan replied reluctantly. Anakin shook his head and had to reach into the Force to calm his anger, even as

justifiable as this anger was. Padme looked terrified by the notion that the Jedi would actually come after their babies. Sabe placed her hands on Padme's shoulders and gave them a comforting squeeze.

"They can't have them. If someone tries to come to Naboo and take them…they'll have to go through me first," Anakin said. Obi-Wan placed a hand on his shoulder.

"They'll have to go through me as well," Obi-Wan stated…

Later that evening…

"It's good to see you again. I'm really sorry to hear about your master," Zara told her friend.

"It's okay, I'm moving on. The council says that if I do a good job protecting the Chancellor, they might submit my name for the trials," Tia said.

"That's great. You'll do well with this assignment. I've spent the last few weeks with the Chancellor and he is a very wise man," Zara said.

"Indeed. But I'm sure you'll be enjoying your new assignment just as much. I hear Naboo is a beautiful planet," Tia replied. Zara snorted.

"I've been assigned to protect a woman I can't stand," Zara replied.

"Yes, I was in the Chancellor's office when Anakin came storming in. He was furious that the Chancellor and the council assigned you to her security. He thinks he can do it just fine himself," Tia replied.

"Well, he probably can," Zara replied.

"Come on Zar, don't tell me you're not looking forward to being this close to Anakin," Tia replied. Zara looked shocked, but Tia continued.

"Please Zara, I'm your best friend. I know about your feelings for him," Tia replied.

"Please don't tell anyone, I don't need a lecture," Zara pleaded.

"Oh I won't. Besides, I think you should go after him if your really want him," Tia suggested.

"Are you out of your mind? He's married to Senator Amidala with two children on the way! Plus, you haven't seen them together. It's nauseating how attentive and loving he is to her," Zara replied jealously.

"Just think about what I said," Tia reiterated.

"Tia, I would be disobeying the code," Zara replied.

"So? Anakin didn't seem to give a damn about the stupid code. I even heard that Master Kenobi has even suggested they begin revising the outdated code," Tia mentioned. Zara gave her a thoughtful look, but remained silent.

"We should both turn in for the night," Zara said quietly, as she left for her room. Tia smiled knowingly, after she had left the room.

The next morning...

Padme and Sabe waited at the door of Mon Mothma's apartment. Padme was here to say goodbye to her friends, while Sabe was here to get acquainted. She was filling Padme's post until Queen Apilana could find a replacement. Padme had yet to tender an official resignation and right now her official status was still maternity leave. Sabe was filling the position and because of the assassination attempts on Padme, Obi-Wan had been assigned to her protection by the council.

"Hello Padme, Sabe, come in," Mon Mothma greeted. Both woman nodded and stepped inside. Mon Mothma frowned slightly, as she looked at Padme's extended belly. The two woman sat down after being greeted by Bail and a few other senators.

"As you all know, I'm leaving his morning for Naboo. I have not yet made a decision on the future of my service to the Republic, but for now Sabe will be filling my post," Padme informed.

"Padme, I must say that I am a little concerned about your possible decision to leave the Senate," Mon Mothma said.

"I know, but my husband and my children must come first now. I will not have a handmaiden raising my children for me. Anakin and I want that pleasure to ourselves. If it becomes certain that I cannot find a balance between work and family, then I will resign my post in the Senate," Padme informed everyone. Mon Mothma seemed even more concerned now.

"Padme, are you sure giving up your career for this relationship is a wise decision?" Mon Mothma asked.

"Of course it is. My career has been very fulfilling and I have accomplished many things. I'm ready to add being a good mother to that list of accomplishments," Padme told her.

"Forgive me Padme, I just think that you're leaving the Senate at a bad time. It is rather selfish," Mon Mothma said.

"I assure you Mon Mothma that I am leaving my post in Sabe's very capable hands. She won't disappoint you," Padme bit back.

"I'm sure that Mon Mothma didn't mean that they way it sounded Padme," Bail replied, trying to dispel to the growing tension between the women.

"But I did Bail. This is a most inopportune time for you to be running off with your Jedi husband to settle down and have babies. The

Republic is in shambles and you're deserting your obligations," Mon Mothma said. Padme put a hand to her mouth, wincing from the verbal slap that Mon Mothma had delivered.

"I thought you would be happy for me Mon. I have never been so happy as I am with Anakin. We've both tirelessly served the Republic and they don't seem to be very appreciative of us. Anakin and I are very content to now be focusing on our family," Padme said, as she rose to leave. She was followed by a stunned Sabe. Bail quickly rushed out after the two women.

"Padme, please know that not all of us feel that way," Bail pleaded with her.

"Not all of them, or just you Bail?" Padme asked. Bail winced.

"I don't feel that way and I want you to know that I am very happy for you and for Anakin," Bail told. Padme smiled softly.

"Thank you Bail," she replied.

"I expect a call when those babies are born," Bail said.

"I promise you'll have one, thank you," Padme replied, as she hugged her friend and bid him farewell.

Padme arrived back at the apartment, only to see Threepio busy packing things. Obi-Wan was out on the veranda with Anakin, who was busy checking the ship over with Artoo. Zara had arrived and was standing quietly in the corner, a brooding look on her face. Padme gave her a small smile and a nod, which was not returned. Sabe followed her out to the veranda. Anakin saw her and went to her.

"Did everything go okay?" he asked.

"No, but I'll tell you later," she said, with a small frown. He nodded, though his face showed his obvious concern for her. He kissed her gently, a gesture which she eagerly returned.

"The ship's in good shape. I think we're just about ready to leave," he said. She nodded.

"Let's say goodbye to Sabe and Obi-Wan," she replied, as they joined hands.

Threepio started toward the Nubian cruiser, his arms full with two of Padme's travel cases.

"Oh, I don't much like flying," Threepio muttered to himself. Artoo rolled along behind him and emitted a series of beeps and clicks.

"Excuse me, what did you call me you little bucket of bolts?" Threepio asked in a snotty tone. Artoo replied with another series of boops and clicks.

"A useless chatter box! Why you little scrap pile!" Threepio exclaimed.

Threepio mumbled to himself, as he took the cases onto the ship. Artoo emitted what sounded like chuckles, as he swung his dome around to look at Anakin. Anakin shook his head at the little droid, conveying that it had not been very nice to get Threepio all worked up. Typho, Dorme, and Zara boarded the ship, while Anakin and Padme said goodbye to Obi-Wan and Sabe.

"We want to hear the moment they are born," Sabe told Padme.

"Don't worry, Anakin will contact you both when I go into labor," Padme assured her.

"Be careful Anakin and take care," Obi-Wan said.

"We will master, I just wish you and Sabe could be there," Anakin replied.

"We do too Anakin. But we'll see you both soon, as well as our little God children," Obi-Wan assured him. Anakin nodded, as he hugged his former master. Obi-Wan and Sabe hugged them both. The couple joined hands and boarded the ship with Artoo following them up the ramp. Anakin made sure everyone was strapped in, before he and Artoo took off and piloted the ship out of Coruscant's atmosphere.

"Are we clear for the jump to hyperspace Artoo?" Anakin asked. Artoo beeped a yes and Anakin began the sequence. The sleek, Nubian cruiser made the jump and was well on the way to home to Naboo...

Return to Naboo

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here.

AN: Thanks everyone for the great reviews! Here's chapter 10! Enjoy and let me know what you think!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 10: Return to Naboo

Bail Organa trailed behind, as Mon Mothma showed their other constituents out.

"Is there something else you'd like to discuss Bail?" she asked.

"Yes, I believe you were very unfair to Padme," Bail replied.

"She has greatly inconvenienced us. We are already a minority in the Senate. We need all the supporters we can get if we are to ever get Palpatine to give up his emergency powers," Mon Mothma said.

"You heard Palpatine. As long as the Separatist leaders are still at large, he will remain in power. And it seems that this elusive Sith Lord has found someone to replace Grevious, as he or she has kept the separatists safe from the Jedi," Bail replied.

"I just think she's foolish for letting some relationship ruin her career," Mon Mothma replied.

"Padme has been serving her planet and the Republic since she was still a girl. She deserves to settle down and be happy if that's what she really wants. And if she chooses to balance a career and a family, then I see no problem with it," Bail replied.

"Her duty to the Republic would have to come first. There's no room for matter of the heart in this legislation," Mon Mothma replied.

"Maybe that is what is wrong with our broken Republic. Many under estimate the power that love has over a person," Bail said.

"I could never and would never let love change my priorities," Mon Mothma argued. Bail chuckled.

"Padme told me that once too. It was not long after she first came to the Senate. But in my experience, love can be a complicated thing, yet it has a surprising simplicity at the same time. Padme told me how she and Anakin fought their feelings for each other. How they both knew that they were forbidden to be together. But that's the funny thing about love. It doesn't know that he is a Jedi and that she is a senator. Nor does it care in the least. Love can be crazy, irrational, and impossible at times. But it is also boundless and knows no discrimination, nor differentiation between classes or types of people," Bail said.

"You and I see love a different way. True love does not exist for me. Nor do I believe it exists for anyone," Mon Mothma replied. Bail stood to leave.

"Then I do hope that love proves you wrong someday, I truly do. Good day Senator Mothma," Bail said, as he left her apartment.

Barriss Offee sighed deeply, as she shut off the holo-projector. Master Windu had just informed her of her padawan's current assignment. Personally, she thought it was a horrible error in judgement on the council's part, yet none of them knew of Zara's infatuation with Anakin. She wished she was there to help guide her padawan right now, but she knew that she had to trust that Zara would remember her teachings and let the Force guide her.

Personally, she didn't see the need for Zara to be there and was sure that Anakin had been insulted by the blatant insinuation that he could not take care of his wife. The dark side had been increasingly oppressive, as of late. And she knew that meant that the dark Lord was at work.

She and Master Unduli were not as close to finding the Separatists leaders as they would like to be. All their leads had gone cold and whenever they felt they were getting close, the Separatists leaders were moved again, almost like phantoms. They were leaving no trails and always seemed to be one or two steps ahead of the Jedi. Master Secura and Master Fisto had been charged with finding all the droid factories they could and shutting them down. So far, they had shut down the ones on Utapau, Mustafar, and a few other sparse outer rim planets. But the war still raged and they lost more and more Jedi everyday...

Anakin smiled, after checking the trajectory course. They were about 3 ½ hours into their flight and he would be ready to bring them out of hyperspace in about 20 minutes. He smiled, as he felt a pair of arms wrap around his neck from behind.

"Hi angel," he said. She kissed him on the cheek.

"Hi," she replied. Anakin smiled and pulled her into his lap.

"How long till we're home?" she asked.

"Artoo should be bringing us out of hyperspace in about 20 minutes," Anakin replied. She cuddled close to him, as he caressed her round stomach.

"I can't wait till we're home, by the lake," she said.

"Me either," Anakin replied, as he let his eyes trace over her beautiful face. She smiled brightly at him and blushed faintly. He still held the ability to make her blush and always made her feel so beautiful. She remembered back to the time when he first looked at her like he was now. His gaze was so intense and loving. At first, it had scared her. And mostly because of the things it had made her feel. That first time, she had wanted to melt under that gaze, and that scared her, because he was a Jedi padawan and she was a Senator. Love

between them was impossible. She remembered how she had rebuked him that day...

Please don't look at me like that," she had requested.

"Why not?" he had asked frankly.

"It makes me feel uncomfortable," she had retorted.

Indeed, it had made her uncomfortable, but in an exciting, beautiful way. Now, she loved when he looked at her that way. And she loved gazing back into those beautiful sapphire eyes. She leaned in and met his lips in a passionate, searing kiss.

"I love you Ani," she said, as they broke the kiss.

"I love you too Padme," he replied. Artoo interrupted them with a warning beep.

"Looks like Artoo is ready to bring us out of hyperspace, so we'll have to continue this later my love," Anakin said. Padme smiled and kissed his cheek.

"Promise?" she asked.

"Absolutely," he replied. She stood up and strapped into the co-pilot seat. Anakin flipped a switch, which would notify those in back that it was time to buckle in.

"Take us home baby," Padme said.

"Anything for you angel," he replied, as they waited for landing clearance.

Anakin brought the ship in and landed it in the palace hanger. After a brief meeting with Queen Apiliana, their entourage boarded one of Padme's larger speeders and headed for the lake country. Unfortunately, the holonet had heard about Padme's return to Naboo

and they were currently being followed by several speeders full of cameras and reporters.

"Oh no, I don't want them to find the lake country," Padme said. Anakin reached over and tightened her strap.

"Everybody, hold on tight to something," Anakin ordered.

"Ani, what are you doing?" Padme asked. He smirked and smiled dangerously, a look that Padme knew well.

"We're going to lose them," Anakin replied, as he floored it. He expertly wove and rounded off their current path, taking several different paths. After a few minutes, there was no one following them. Anakin brought them back to the main path and continued on, not bothering to slow much.

"Are you crazy! You could have got us killed!" Zara yelled.

"Relax, I know what I'm doing," Anakin replied. Dorme and Typho looked equally disturbed, but it hadn't seemed to bother Padme.

"Everything's a pod race to Anakin. But he's right, he knows what he's doing," she replied.

"Thank you angel," he smiled.

"And if you ever fly like that with the twins in the speeder, you'll be sleeping alone for a week," she warned. He winced and then smiled again. Padme couldn't help but to smile back at him warmly.

"No wonder Obi-Wan hates flying with you," Padme retorted.

"He doesn't hate flying with me, he just hates flying in general," Anakin replied. She laughed.

"Uh huh," she replied. He smiled back at her before beginning to slow, seeing that they were coming up on the lake. From their, they would be taking the water speeder to the lake house at Varykino.

The water speeder took them to the dock at the lake house. To Padme's pleasant surprise, Sola was waiting for them.

"Sola!" Padme cried happily, as she flung her arms around her sister's neck, giving her a big hug.

"It's so good to see you." Sola said, as she stepped back so she could look at her little sister.

"Oh Padme, you look wonderful. You're glowing," Sola said.

"Thank you Sola. Anakin says the same thing, but I think you're both just being nice. I don't feel very beautiful like this," Padme said.

"Well, you are," Anakin said, as he set some of their bags down.

"Hello Anakin, it's good to see you again," Sola said, as she hugged him.

"It's good to see you too Sola," Anakin replied.

"Where are mom, dad, and the girls?" Padme asked.

"Mom, dad, Darred and the girls are coming up tomorrow. They sent me ahead, so we can have a little sister time, if you don't mind Anakin," Sola said.

"Of course not. After I get our things taken in, I have to contact Obi-Wan anyway," Anakin replied.

"Oh Sola, you remember Captain Typho and Dorme of corse," Padme said. They all nodded in agreement.

"This is padawan Zara Caelan. The Jedi council has sent her for extra security," Padme said.

"It's a pleasure to meet you Zara," Sola said, though a questioning glance at Padme said that she wanted to know what was going on.

"Likewise," Zara replied stiffly.

"Padawan Caelan, if you and Dorme will follow me, we can begin working on the security routine for the senator," Typho said. The two women nodded and followed.

"Well, I think I'll borrow you wife for a bit Anakin. We have a lot to catch up on," Sola said. Padme rolled her eyes.

"You mean you have a lot to grill me on," Padme replied. Anakin chuckled and kissed her tenderly on the lips.

"I'll see you both later," he said, as he and Threepio started carrying their bags to the house. Artoo rolled along with them, carrying on with the usual banter between him and Threepio.

"Let's go to the kitchen for a glass of Shurra juice and you can tell me everything," Sola said. Padme giggled and followed her older sister.

"So what's with that girl? Why is she here?" Sola asked.

"Well Chancellor Palpatine and the council thought the extra security is needed. It was a major insult to Ani. I'm perfectly safe with my husband," Padme said.

"Why would the Jedi be so concerned? I thought they expelled Anakin," Sola said. Padme paused for a second.

"They did, but some of the council members...want to take the twins from us since they are strong in the Force," Padme said. Sola gasped.

"Oh Padme, no," Sola cried.

"Don't worry Sola, Anakin won't let that happen. If we have to hide from the Republic, we will. I feel like the Republic has become the very evil we've been fighting against," Padme admitted sadly. Sola put a hand on her shoulder.

"Maybe it's time you and Anakin left that life," Sola said.

"Maybe. Don't get me wrong, not all of the council members feel the same. Ani and I know we can trust Obi-Wan and master Yoda," Padme said.

"Would they really come here for the twins?" Sola asked.

"Anakin told me that it is mandatory that children with midichlorian counts of 1200 or more be handed over to the Jedi. If master Yoda and Obi-Wan are out voted on the council and the twins have high enough midichlorian counts...then yes," Padme said.

"Oh Padme, I'm so sorry," Sola said.

"Don't worry Sola, Anakin would never let anything happen to any of us," Padme said.

"Yes, tell me all about your handsome Jedi husband," Sola said slyly. Padme smiled shyly and her cheeks turned rosy.

"Oh little sister, are you blushing? He really must be something wonderful. And I'm so happy for you," Sola smiled.

"He is. And thank you Sola. I'm just sorry that we had to hide it from you and everyone else," Padme said.

"It's okay, I know why you did. But I would have loved to see the wedding," Sola said. Padme smiled.

"Artoo, come in here," Padme called. Artoo chirped, happily responding to his mistress.

"Artoo, play recording 432," Padme said. Artoo blooped and emitted a recording of their wedding day on the balcony of the lake country.

"Oh Padme, you looked beautiful. Anakin looked so young and handsome. And what a romantic setting," Sola gushed.

"Thanks. I always wanted to get married at sunset. That was the happiest day of my life," Padme said.

"Thank you for showing me," Sola said.

"You're welcome Sola," Padme replied.

Later that evening...

Padme and Anakin sat curled up together later that evening in front of the fireplace. Sola and the everyone else had already gone to bed. Anakin smiled, thinking about the first time they had been in front of this fireplace. He had poured out his heart and soul to her. She had shot him down, and told him that a love between them wasn't possible. But her eyes and her body language had told a different story. He knew that she loved him too, even if she refused to admit it. He grinned wickedly, as he thought of her attire that night. Just thinking about her in that dress still drove him crazy. He rolled the small case around in his pocket with his fingers. He had been saving this little gift for their anniversary in three months, but he realized this was the perfect time to give it to her.

"Angel, there's something I want to give you," Anakin said, as he pulled the small case out of his pocket. She lifted her head from his chest and turned to look at him.

"What is it Ani?" she asked.

"Well, I know it's the Naboo custom to give a ring to the woman when the man asks her to marry him,"

"Oh Ani, you know I don't care about that. You're all I've ever wanted or needed," she said. He looked down shyly.

"I know and I still wonder sometimes what I did to deserve you. But let me finish my story angel," he said. She smiled warmly.

"Okay," she replied.

"About three months ago, Obi-Wan and I busted some smugglers in the outer rim. They were smuggling jewelry from the core planets to the outer rim," Anakin paused and took the ring out of the case. It was a generously cut sapphire stone set in a silver-gold band.

"When I saw this, all I could think of was how beautiful it would look on your finger," Anakin said, as slipped it on her finger. Padme's mouth was ajar and tears glistened in her brown eyes.

"Oh Anakin! This is a Nubian sapphire. They are really rare," Padme said. Anakin smiled.

"I know, I asked one of the smugglers about it after we detained them. I think he was a little curious as to why a Jedi would want to know, but he wasn't about to question one. He said that this particular cut was called an angel's teardrop. I was even more certain then that it was made for you," he replied. By now, tears were streaming down her face.

"Oh Ani, it's beautiful. Thank you so much," Padme said, as she flung her arms around his neck. She pulled him into a kiss, moving her lips passionately over his in a zealous rate. She giggled, as they tumbled back down on the couch together. Anakin was too lost in Padme to sense the pair of eyes watching them from the darkness. The padawan's face contorted with anger and jealously...

Zara stood on the balcony overlooking the lake. She found it impossible to sleep. Dreams of Anakin were plaguing her. She remembered when he first came to the temple and how she had been one of the only younglings to not shun him or that wasn't afraid of him. They had formed a friendship and she had watched with some amount of awe as Anakin excelled in his training. He had natural abilities and the Force flowed so strongly in him.

They grew together from children into young adults. She had first noticed just how attractive he was during her early teen years and a small crush had formed. She knew that there was nothing she could ever do about it, but thing were a lot different now. Anakin had thrown all his training away for a beautiful, yet Force blind woman. Padme Amidala was responsible for taking Anakin away from her and the order. She wanted Anakin. She could make him happy better than Amidala could! And with code possibly changing, she and Anakin could have been together. She recalled the whispers and images from her dreams. The Force was speaking to her, she was sure of it.

Amidala lay dead on the cold ground and Anakin knelt over her crying and broken. Then the voice whispered to her.

" *He's yours now...take him. You killed Amidala, the only obstacle keeping him from you. He's yours now...show him that he belongs to you...*

The dark powers she welded made her feel so powerful. She knew these thoughts were not the way of the Jedi, but she found herself no longer caring...

The dark emotions continued to swirl inside her, growing in power and strength. The voice inside her head was becoming relentless in its urging for her to kill the senator. She hated Padme Amidala and she wanted her dead...

in Anakin and Padme's bedroom...

A dark tremor ripped through the Force and alerted his senses. He shot up out of bed, gasping for breath. The dark tremor was evil and menacing. And he sensed that it was directed toward Padme. But as suddenly as it had appeared, it was gone. Unfortunately, he had not been the only one to feel the dark sensation. Inside Padme's womb, there were two large thumps and the sack of amniotic fluid broke...

Padme cried out next to Anakin, as she woke up with pain in her abdomen.

"Padme, are you okay?" Anakin asked.

"Oh Ani, it's time. My water broke!" she said frantically...

The Skywalker Twins

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here.

AN: Here's chapter 11! Thanks for all the great reviews and I do apologize for last chapter's cliffhanger, but it was necessary. Enjoy!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 11: The Skywalker Twins

Anakin squeezed Padme's hand to assure her that he was not going anywhere. With his other hand, he dabbed her sweaty forehead with a cool cloth. Two hours ago, the quiet lake house had erupted with commotion. Sola had quickly called her parents and Ruwee and Jobal were on their way with doctor Karre, who had been the Naberrie family healer for years. An hour ago, her contractions were coming about five minutes apart and now they were about three minutes apart. He only hoped that Padme's parents and the healer got here soon, as Sola had told him it would soon be time for Padme to start pushing. Anakin sensed another contraction building in her. He slowly reached into the Force and took some of her pain on himself. He opened his eyes and gave her a weak smile.

"You...don't have to do...that Ani," Padme said between her rapid breaths.

"Let me do anything I can to help you with the pain, angel," he replied.

"Goodness yes little sister. I wish Darred could have done what he's doing," Sola chuckled.

"We're here Padme!" Jobal said, as she, Ruwee, and the healer arrived.

"Hi mom...hi daddy. Hello...doctor Karre," Padme managed to say.

"Hello Padme, it's good to see you. And you must be Anakin," the kind, older woman said.

"Yes maim," Anakin replied politely. The healer moved to the end of the bed to see how far along Padme's dilation was.

"How far apart are her contractions?" Karre asked.

"About a minute and a half now," Anakin answered.

"Okay Padme, you're fully dilated, so once your next contractions comes, I need you to start pushing," Karre said. Padme nodded. Her next contraction came quickly and Padme began pushing. She squeezed Anakin's hand tightly and screamed in pain.

"Good Padme, breath," Karre instructed. Padme gasped for air and pushed again, as another contraction swept through her.

"Good Padme. The first baby's head is crowning. This is going to be a big push honey," Karre told her. Padme gasped for air and nodded. Another contraction came and Padme pushed again, screaming as the first child's head emerged. Padme whimpered, as she again gasped for air.

"You're doing great angel," Anakin told her, as he kissed her temple.

"Okay sweetheart, one more push," Karre instructed. Padme took a deep breath and pushed with all her might. A tiny cry filled the room, as Karre handled the tiny infant. She went through the procedure of snipping the umbilical cord, before handing the baby to Jobal and Sola so they could clean the baby off. Anakin stared at his new daughter in awe, as a few tears began to trek down his face.

"Congratulations Padme, you have a beautiful daughter. But I need you to do what you just did one more time," Karre instructed. Another contraction erupted through her and she screamed, pushing again. It passed and she collapsed back on the bed.

"Oh, I'm so tired Ani," she whimpered.

"I know angel, it's almost over," he reassured her.

"He's right Padme, this one's not wasting any time. The head is crowning, so I need you to push!" Karre instructed. Padme pushed again, screaming as the head of the second child emerged.

"Good honey, one more big push and it's all over. I promise," Karre said. Padme nodded and pushed with all her might. Another tiny cry mingled with the first baby's, as this one entered the world. Karre performed the same procedure, snipping the umbilical cord, before handing the baby to Jobal.

"Congratulations again to you both, you have a beautiful son too," Karre said. Sola beamed brightly, as she delivered Padme's daughter into her waiting arms. Happy tears streamed down Padme's cheeks.

"Hello Leia," she said.

"Oh Padme, she...she's beautiful," Anakin stuttered. Padme smiled at him and kissed his cheek.

"Anakin would you like to hold your son?" Sola asked. Anakin nodded and Sola carefully placed the baby boy in his father's arms.

"Hello Luke," Anakin said, as he and his infant son stared into each other's eyes for what seemed like the longest time.

"They're both so beautiful Padme," Anakin said, as he watched his children coo and wiggle around in their parent's arms.

"They are. I love you so much Ani," Padme sniffed.

"I love you too angel," he replied, as he kissed her forehead.

Sabe sighed tiredly, as she and Obi-Wan returned to Anakin and Padme's apartment.

"I don't know how she does it Obi-Wan. I don't know how she goes there and reals with them everyday," Sabe said, referring to those in the Senate.

"Me either, but while you were in session, I did get a comm from Anakin," Obi-Wan mentioned. That brightened her mood considerably. Obi-Wan smiled at her.

"Padme went into labor?" she asked.

"Very early this morning. The twins were born about 2 am. Anakin commed me this afternoon and I told him that we'd contact him tonight. He said that was fine, since it would give Padme ample time to rest.

"Well, what are you waiting for Jedi! I want to meet my God children!" Sabe exclaimed. Obi-Wan chuckled, as he heard the door chime.

"I hope you don't mind, but I invited Senator Organa, as he answered the door.

"Good evening senator, I was just about to get the Skywalker family on the holo screen, so you're just in time," Obi-Wan said.

"That's wonderful, but please call me Bail," Organa said, as he entered. Obi-Wan proceeded to turn on the holo screen and send a comm signal to Anakin on Naboo.

Anakin flipped on the holo screen and the images of Obi-Wan, Sabe, and Bail Organa came in to view. He sat down with Padme on the bed. She was holding Leia and he was holding Luke. Padme looked rested after her long well deserved nap that afternoon. Thanks to Jobal and Sola, she had enjoyed the rest. And besides being sore,

she was feeling very good. At his mother-in-law's urging, he had also laid down with her for a while, not realizing how much he needed the sleep as well.

After that, Padme had taught him how to operate the bottle warmer properly, so he could help with feeding, especially in the likely event that both decided they wanted to eat at the same time. While she breast fed Luke, Anakin had taken great delight in feeding Leia. He thought back to when Padme had told him to have faith in their love and that it would always be enough to save them. Now, he truly believed that after seeing the two little miracles that had been created by their love. He had let those warm feelings wash over him. He knew how close he had come to the dark side and he knew the darkness would always be apart of him. But it would never again control him or consume him.

"Well, it seems our new parents look to be doing well," Bail said.

"We are, thank you Bail," Padme replied.

"Well, let's see them," Sabe said excitedly.

"They're both beautiful, congratulations to you both," Obi-Wan smiled.

"Oh they are. I can't wait to meet them both in person," Sabe said.

"Thank you," Anakin replied to them both.

"How are things on Coruscant?" Padme asked. Bail sighed.

"Not very good, I'm afraid. The senate is in uproar, because the separatist attacks have not ceased and the leaders are still at large," Bail said.

"The council believes that the same clawdite assassin that tired to kill you may be the one helping the separatists evade capture and orchestrating the attacks," Obi-Wan said.

"Talks in the Senate are going no where. Chancellor Palpatine is adjourning the Senate tomorrow. All sessions will be suspended until further notice," Sabe said.

"Sabe, what are you not telling me?" Padme asked. Sabe wrung her hands in her lap and looked up at her best friend.

"Chancellor Palpatine has proposed an amendment to place the republic under marshal law until an end to this war can be reached," Sabe said.

"Marshal Law? But that's against everything the republic stands for!" Padme said.

"I know, but I can assure you that Bail and I will do everything we can to see that it's not passed," Sabe replied. Padme frowned deeply.

"It won't matter, you'll be outnumbered," Padme replied sadly. Anakin put a hand on her shoulder. Luke cooed up at them both, bringing smiles to their faces. There was no doubt about it, their children were very strong in the Force. And that thought suddenly brought a frown to his face.

"Since the senate is adjourning, the council has given me permission to escort Sabe to Naboo, so we'll be seeing you in a few days," Obi-Wan said. Anakin smiled.

"That's good to hear. We're anxious to see you," Anakin replied.

"We're anxious too, but for now, we'll let you both get some rest," Obi-Wan said. They bid each other good night. Anakin and Padme placed their sleeping twins in the bassinet by their bed. They undressed and changed into their night clothes, before snuggling into bed together. Anakin wrapped his arms around her and kissed her tenderly.

"Good night angel," he said.

"Good night Ani, I love you," she replied.

"I love you too Padme," she said. It wasn't long before they were both fast asleep like their children.

Barriss Offee sat so deeply in her thoughts that she did not even hear her master's approach. Luminara placed a hand on her former padawan's shoulder. Barriss jumped in surprise.

"I'm sorry master, I was lost in my thoughts," Barriss apologized.

"What has got you so deeply worried Barriss?" Luminara asked, concern lacing her voice.

"It is my padawan, master. I believe letting her take this assignment was a mistake," Barriss replied.

"What has brought you to this conclusion?" Luminara asked.

"She has been warring with some very dark emotions. It started with the death of her first master and is being fueled by her inappropriate emotions toward Anakin and Senator Amidala. I feel anger, hate and jealousy in her. Her infatuation with Anakin is growing into an obsession. Putting her close to him was an error in judgement," Barriss said.

"Have you discussed this with the rest of the council?" Luminara asked.

"No master, I wanted to give Zara the chance to work through her emotions on her own. If I tell the council, she will feel like I have betrayed her," Barriss said.

"Perhaps, but you must do what is in her best interest. Perhaps you should contact master Kenobi and proceed from there," Luminara advised. Barriss nodded and sat before the holo screen to make her call.

"Obi-Wan answered the holo com in Anakin and Padme's apartment. Barriss' image appeared.

"Good evening master Kenobi, I hope I'm not disturbing you," Barriss greeted.

"Of course not Barriss, you look troubled. What can I do for you?" Obi-Wan asked.

"I am very worried about my padawan. She has been struggling with some things lately. Barriss proceeded to tell Obi-Wan about the things she had been sensing and what she had told master Unduli. When she finished her explanation, Obi-Wan's face was set in a deep, contemplative frown.

"I understand your concerns Barriss. Zara will feel betrayed, but I am more concerned about Padme if Zara is indeed feeling jealous toward her. I will place a request to have her removed from this assignment with master Windu and Master Yoda. Then I will have to speak with Anakin. You did the right thing by coming forward Barriss," Obi-Wan said.

"I know master Kenobi and thank you for speaking on my behalf. May the Force be with you," Barriss said.

"And with you," Obi-Wan replied, as her transmission blinked out. Obi-Wan sighed. It was late and Sabe had already gone to sleep. He decided that he should meditate on Padawan Caelan's state of mind. If it was as serious as he thought, then Anakin needed to know about the possible threat to Padme right away...

Obi-Wan Kenobi entered Master Windu's meditation chamber, only to find both he and master Yoda waiting for him.

"What is it that you wanted to discuss with us?" Mace asked.

"Barriss Offee contacted me last night and asked for me to make a request to you on her behalf. She has asked that we recall Zara from this mission, as she has sensed some troubling emotions coming from the padawan," Obi-Wan said.

"Agree with her, do you?" Yoda asked.

"Yes master, I believe she could be a threat to Senator Amidala," Obi-Wan said.

"A threat to the Senator? How so?" Mace asked.

"According to Barriss, she has become increasingly infatuated with Anakin ever since he saved her life after that explosion and increasingly jealous toward Padme," Obi-Wan reported.

"This is unacceptable. This is exactly why the Jedi do not allow attachment," Mace replied.

"Forgive me master, but I don't think you can compare the feelings that Zara and Anakin are feeling. Zara is feeling jealousy and obsession. What Anakin feels for Padme is love. I don't feel that you can continue to deny that. You have to be able to feel how much Anakin has begun to mature and change, even if you don't want to," Obi-Wan said. Mace Windu sighed deeply.

"Hard on him, you always have been. With good reasons before perhaps, but does not deserve this now. Not many could have resisted the pull of dark side, especially not one that strong. Commended Anakin should be, not condemned," Yoda said.

"I know I have been hard on him and that I have never liked him. And I know that I can't change my mind about him over night, but I will make a sincere effort to do so," Mace offered.

"No more can we ask of you master Windu," Yoda nodded.

"I agree that we must deal with padawan Caelan. Speak with her and Anakin and make sure she is on the next transport to Coruscant," Mace said. Obi-Wan nodded and left to speak with them.

"We must address the matters in the Senate. Chancellor Palpatine is calling to place the Republic under marshal law today. We must remove him," Mace told Yoda.

"Hmm...a dark and dangerous place that will take us. Take control of the Senate we would have to temporarily. See it that way some might not. Use it as an opportunity to destroy us, the Sith Lord could," Yoda advised.

"Then what will we do?" Mace asked.

"Bide our time. Give the dark Lord a reason to attack us, we will not. But discover his identity we must and soon..." Yoda said.

Zara furiously stuffed her things into her small travel case. Master Offee had betrayed her! She had told the council about her feelings toward Anakin and Padme! Now, she was to report back to the council, where she was sure she would undergo months of observation, meditation, and lecturing. Zara swiped her tears away angrily.

"How could master Offee do this to me!" Zara growled.

"She's just doing what's best for you Zara, what's best for all of us," Anakin said, coming in to her room.

"I suppose master Kenobi told you all about my feelings! They seem to be on display for the public!" Zara yelled. Anakin scoffed.

"Anything that concerns my wife and children is something that I need to know about. Obi-Wan was just informing of the situation," Anakin replied.

"Just get out Anakin, I know you hate me now," Zara yelled.

"I don't hate you Zara. You're just confused about what you're feeling. Master Offee will help you work through this," Anakin replied.

"So now my feelings for you aren't real!" she yelled.

"I didn't say they weren't real, but what you're feeling toward me isn't love. And if you are feeling jealous toward Padme, then I can't have you near her. This is for the best," Anakin replied.

"What has she done to blind you so? All you ever think about is her!" Zara retorted.

"She is my wife and I love her. What has happened to you? That's the question you should be asking yourself. Don't let this anger control you. I almost let mine control me and I would have lost everything because of it!" Anakin replied.

"She's a politician and she'll betray you someday, you'll see," Zara tried to convince him.

"No Zara, Padme will never hurt me like that. Captain Typho will be taking you to Theed," Anakin said. Zara scowled at him and stalked out. Anakin hated that things were going to be left like this between them, as they had been friends for a long time. But if she was a threat to Padme or the twins...then he wanted her as far away from Naboo as possible.

Several hours later, Zara arrived back on Coruscant. She scowled at the Jedi temple in the distance. She would face nothing but scolding and lecturing there once she returned. She didn't want to return...but where could she go? Suddenly, she knew in an instant where she could go for help. Chancellor Palpatine would help her...she knew he would. He always understood her plights and she guessed he would be none too happy about the Jedi removing her from this

assignment. The chancellor would help her. She didn't need the Jedi...

Darkening Times

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here.

AN: Thanks for all the great reviews everyone! Here's chapter 12, so enjoy and let me know what you think!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 12: Darkening Times

Zara burst into Chancellor Palpatine's office, tears streaming down her face.

"Zara, what ever is the matter child? Aren't you supposed to be on Naboo?" he asked.

"They recalled me from the mission. Master Offee has betrayed me!" Zara cried. That surprised even Palpatine a bit. He hadn't expected it to be this easy.

"Tell me what happened dear girl," Palpatine said.

"Master Offee told the council about my feelings for Anakin and my jealousy toward Senator Amidala. Now they want me to return to the temple for observation," Zara explained.

"Did you let these emotions interfere with your duties?" Palpatine asked.

"No, but they don't see it that way," Zara replied.

"It seems that they have treated you unfairly," Palpatine concluded.

"They have, but what can I do?" Zara asked helplessly.

"The Jedi don't deserve one as talented as you are in the Force. However, I am one who has never wasted talent. I believe I could find many fulfilling duties for you," Palpatine said.

"The Jedi would never allow it," Zara replied.

"Well, you could return to the temple...or you could work for me," Palpatine said.

"Work for you?" she asked.

"Yes my dear. Can I trust you with the information I am about to reveal?" Palpatine asked.

"Of course sir. You've been like a father to me, I would never betray you," Zara replied.

"Good. I knew I could trust you young one. The truth is that I believe the Jedi could be plotting to remove me from office by any means necessary. They want control of the Senate," Palpatine said. Zara looked stunned.

"I fear for my life and for the Republic. I need your help my dear," Palpatine pleaded.

"Of course I'll help you sir. But do you really believe that the Jedi will try to take over the Senate?" Zara asked.

"I'm afraid so. They always want to be in control. Why do you think they have all those rules? They like to be able to control their subordinates," Palpatine said.

"Like me," Zara answered.

"Yes, they are holding you back. You should have taken the trials months ago," Palpatine said. Zara nodded in agreement.

"I can teach you much, much more than the Jedi ever could...if you become my apprentice," Palpatine said.

"Your apprentice?" Zara asked. As she said that, they circled each other.

"You're the Sith Lord!" she exclaimed.

"Yes Zara. Become my apprentice and I will teach you to use the dark side. You will want for nothing, for the dark side will help you get everything you desire," Palpatine said.

"But...but the dark side is evil!" she cried.

"From the Jedi's point of view. They are wrong about me Zara. I only want to bring peace to the galaxy, but to do so, I need a powerful apprentice. You become my apprentice and your rewards will be rich. You want revenge on your master and the Jedi...and you want to be loved by the one you desire most. With the dark side, anything is possible," Palpatine goaded.

"Anything?" she asked.

"Yes my child. I've always wanted a daughter and you could be her. You have so much potential my dear, please don't let the Jedi control your future any longer," Palpatine begged. The emotions inside her swirled intensely. He was offering her...everything she had ever wanted. Power, revenge, and love. Through the dark side, it could all be hers...

The raging waterfall of negative emotions that had been swirling inside her for months finally broke through her dam and flooded her senses. Her dark, coal eyes burned with a Sithly yellow glow, as she knelt down before Palpatine.

"I pledge myself to your teachings my master," Zara said.

"I foresee you becoming the greatest Sith in history. But you shall no longer be known as Zara Caelan. From this day forward, you shall be called...Darth Psion," Palpatine announced.

"Yes my master...what is thy bidding?" Darth Psion asked.

"For now, Lady Psion, you will depart for Korriban to train in the dark arts. One of my agents awaits you. She will train you and you will become powerful. Right now, you are not quite ready to take on the Jedi," Palpatine said.

"Yes my master," she replied, as she pulled her hood up and exited his office. Palpatine chuckled evilly. When she returned, he would have an apprentice to be reckoned with...

Naboo...

Anakin watched and listened from the door way of their bedroom, as Padme softly sang a lullaby to their twins. It was fairly early in the evening and after a long day of being the center of attention, Luke and Leia were very sleepy. Anakin wrapped his arms around her waist and peered down at them over her shoulder. She turned her head and smiled at him, as she continued to sing softly. The melody ended and Anakin kissed her cheek and then her neck.

"We make beautiful babies Mrs. Skywalker," Anakin said, as he continued to gaze down at their sleeping children.

"Yes we do, Mr. Skywalker," she replied, as she turned in his embrace. She leaned up and met his lips in a long, tender kiss, which slowly turned more passionate. Anakin was about to use the Force to quietly shut their door, but they were interrupted by someone clearing their throat. They broke the kiss and their faces flushed, as Sola stood in the door way.

"Sorry to interrupt you," Sola said, tossing a cheesy grin to her little sister before becoming serious again.

"There's something on the holonet that you both should see," Sola said. Padme nodded and flipped on the baby monitor. She stuffed it's comlink into her pocket, before joining hands with Anakin, as they

went into the sitting room. The holonet was broadcasting Chancellor Palpatine's latest speech live.

"The time for debate in this matter has passed and your votes are in. It is with a heavy heart that I place the Republic under marshal law until this bloody war can be ended. And it is with a heavy heart that I have to implement these emergency powers. But I assure you, once we put an end to this war, all will be set right," Palpatine concluded,. He was met with applause.

"So this is how liberty dies...with thunderous applause," Padme said. Anakin put his hands on her shoulders, as she turned to him.

"Did anything I ever do make a difference?" she asked bitterly. Anakin brushed his hand against her cheek.

"Of course angel. You've done so much good for your people, they will always remember you for it. And I'm going to make sure out children know everything their mother has done for the people of this galaxy," Anakin told her.

"He's right Padme. You've done more for people than all those politicians in the Senate combined," Sola agreed. Padme smiled slightly and Anakin enveloped her in a warm hug.

"Master Obi-Wan and the Jedi will end this war. Then everything will be okay," Anakin said.

"I hope you're right Ani, I really do," Padme replied. Suddenly, the holoscreen chimed, indicating that they had an incoming call. Anakin switched it on and the concerned face of Obi-Wan Kenobi appeared.

"Hello master," Anakin greeted.

"Hello Anakin, I'm sorry for the distressing tone of this call, but are you absolutely positive that Zara got on the transport headed for Coruscant?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Yes master, Captain Typho saw to her departure yesterday morning," Anakin replied.

"You mean she never returned to the temple?" Anakin asked.

"No and we are very worried. What was her state of mind as she left?" Obi-Wan asked. Now it was Anakin's turn to sigh.

"She was very upset and she felt betrayed. I'm afraid I didn't help the situation any when I told her that I couldn't have her near Padme and the twins if she was feeling the way she was," Anakin replied.

"No Anakin, you were right to tell her that. I'm sorry, but I have to cut this transmission short. I must contact Barriss and inform her of Zara's disappearance. May the Force be with you Anakin," Obi-Wan said.

"And you master," Anakin replied.

"Where do you think she could have gone?" Padme asked.

"I don't know. I just hope she hasn't got herself in to trouble...

Coruscant...The Jedi Temple...

"Obi-Wan, positive Anakin is that she got on that transport?" Yoda asked.

"Yes master, he said that Captain Typho put her on it himself," Obi-Wan replied.

"Very bad this is. Dealing with very dark emotions she was. Find her, we must," Yoda said.

"I have sent a couple of senior padawans to investigate," Mace said.

"What are we going to do about supreme chancellor Palpatine? He has placed us under marshal law," Ki-Adi Mundi said, concern lacing

his voice.

"If take over the Senate we try to, multiply our adversaries will. Keep a close eyes on the Senate we must. No more we can do, until discover the identity of the dark Lord we do," Yoda said.

"Obi-Wan, for now, you will escort Lady Sabe back to Naboo. While your there, we would like you to obtain a blood sample from the Skywalker twins and determine their midichlorian count. Then please send the results back here to the temple," Mace ordered. Obi-Wan sighed deeply.

"We are only asking you to check their midichlorian count Obi-Wan," Adi reminded him.

"And if they are high?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Then we will act accordingly to the laws of the Republic. Obi-Wan frowned, but said nothing as the council meeting was adjourned...

Within the next few days, Chancellor Palpatine adjourned the Senate until further notice. Anakin and Padme stayed quietly tucked away in the lake country, while outside their planet, the war raged heavily. The next six months would be some of the bloodiest and most costly in terms of loss of life in the course of the Clone Wars. As this became apparent to Anakin and Padme, they began to search for an even better hidden home, even deeper into the Lake country.

After the Senate was adjourned, Obi-Wan escorted Sabe back to Naboo, where they met their God children for the first time. It was only a few days later that the council was calling him back, telling him that he was needed in the intensifying outer rim sieges. Over the last few months, he and Sabe had grown very close. Neither could continue to ignore the feelings that were so evident between them, yet Obi-Wan still remained unsure about actually pursuing a relationship, especially with the old code still in debate.

"You leave in the morning?" Sabe asked, as she stepped out onto the balcony that overlooked the lake.

"Yes, I will rendezvous with commander Cody in the outer rim tomorrow," he replied. Sabe walked to him and hugged him, taking him completely by surprise. He was shaken by the desperation he sensed flowing through her. He hugged her back.

"Please be careful out there," she said.

"I will," he replied.

"And before you go, I need you to know..that...that I love you, even if you don't return my feelings," Sabe said sadly. Obi-Wan's heart just about broke in two, as he looked at the crestfallen look on her face. He recalled his earlier conversation with Anakin. He couldn't even remember how they had gotten on the subject, but somehow they had.

" *If you love her master, then just tell her. You're only hurting her and yourself by denying your feelings for each other. Padme and I learned that very quickly," Anakin said.*

" *It's not that easy for me. Being a Jedi is all I know. And if the code isn't changed, then I'm not sure what I can do," Obi-Wan replied.*

" *It's your decision master, but I think you'll be making a huge mistake if you keep pushing her away...*

"No Sabe, I do return your feelings. And it's about time that I stop denying it," Obi-Wan replied.

"You do?" Sabe asked.

"Yes Sabe, I love you too," Obi-Wan replied. Sabe threw her arms around him and kissed him passionately. A kiss that he eagerly returned.

"Stay with me tonight," Sabe whispered to him, her breath brushing on his lips. Obi-Wan responded by kissing her again, as they slowly made their way back inside and to her bedroom...

Six months pass...

Six months had passed since the Republic was placed under marshal law and still the separatists leaders were at large. Zeel Wessel, who had been leading them after Grevious' death continued to wage a fierce war against the Jedi and the Republic. In the last six months since she revealed her identity, she had made quite a name for herself. She never missed an opportunity to boast how she infiltrated the Jedi temple disguised as a Jedi padawan and went undetected. This had been a serious blow to the Jedi council since they realized that their ability to sense the dark side had diminished to almost nothing. Many were now calling them an embarrassment to the Republic and some were even calling for the order to be dissolved.

"It is time to discuss the Skywalker twins," Mace said, as their daily meeting opened.

"Go there, I believe we should not," Yoda said.

"But master, each twin has a midichlorian count of 14, 000. If we do not train them, it would be foolish of us. And we cannot wait until they're older or we risk them turning out like their father," Adi Gallia protested.

"Turned out very well their father did. Refuse to see it you do," Yoda shot back.

"I agree with master Gallia. I know it will be hard for Anakin and Padme, but I believe it is for the best," Mace replied. Yoda shook his head and looked around at the council. Obi-Wan was unable to attend due to the war in the outer rim. The same held true for

Luminara Unduli, Kit Fisto, Plo Koon, and Ki-Adi Mundi. Yoda knew he would be outvoted...

Naboo...a few hours later...

Anakin laid content, his head in Padme's lap. Obi-Wan had managed to get some time to call, so they decided to leave Sabe and he alone, opting to come out to the meadow for a picnic. The twins lay beside them, happily cooing and squealing in delight, as they played and rolled around on the blanket. Anakin laughed, as Padme popped another piece of Shuura fruit in his mouth.

"Are you just going to lay there and let me feed you fruit all day?" Padme playfully huffed. He laughed.

"Sure," he replied playfully, as she leaned down and kissed him passionately. The twins gurgled and cooed at their parents. Anakin chuckled and sat up, pulling the twins into his lap.

"There's room for you here too," Anakin said. She giggled and crawled over to him, joining the rest of her family. She kissed him tenderly, thinking about how happy she was. This is the happiest either of them had ever been in their lives. Suddenly, Anakin frowned and his face turned serious.

"Anakin, what's wrong?" Padme asked. Anakin's eyes were transfixed on the other side of the meadow. Padme followed his eyes and saw what he was seeing. Two Jedi stood in the distance, approaching them. She soon was able to make them out as Master Windu and Master Gallia.

"Oh Ani, they can't! Obi-Wan would have told us if they were coming, wouldn't he?" Padme exclaimed.

"He's been in the outer rim and not present at council meetings, so he probably didn't know," Anakin replied. Tears threatened to fall from her eyes.

"Don't worry angel, I won't let them take the twins. I'll fight them if I have to," Anakin said, as he kissed her softly on the lips. He kissed each of his children on the head, before handing them to their mother, while he stood up to meet the Jedi.

"Master Windu, master Gallia," Anakin bowed respectfully.

"It's good to see you Anakin. And you too Padme," Mace greeted.

"What brings you to Naboo?" Anakin asked, even though he already knew why. Mace sighed, realizing that this was harder for him than he thought.

"Your children each have midichlorian counts of 14,000. We have come to take them to be trained as Jedi," Mace said calmly. Tears leaked from Padme's eyes and trailed down her cheeks.

"I'm sorry masters, but you can't take our children from us," Anakin replied calmly.

"I'm afraid it's not a choice Skywalker," Adi replied.

"I said no, master Gallia," Anakin said firmly. Padme stood up behind Anakin, holding both the twins.

"It is Republic law Anakin, we must do our duty," Adi said. Padme's tears were coming faster now and Luke and Leia must have sensed their mother's distress, as they too began to get upset. Anakin looked back at his family and did the only thing he could think to do. He got down on his knees and prepared to beg if he had to.

"Please...please, I'll do anything, anything you ask. Just don't take them away from their mother," Anakin begged, as tears trekked down his face.

"Please, I'll do anything," Anakin repeated. Adi looked unfazed, but Mace was truly shocked. The Anakin Skywalker he knew had never begged for anything for the sake of someone else. What he was

displaying was true selflessness and that was a trait of a true Jedi. Master Yoda was right, he had been wrong about Anakin. But it wasn't too late to redeem that.

"Let's go Adi," Mace said. Master Gallia turned to him sharply, shock on her face.

"What?" she asked.

"Let's go. We're sorry to have bothered you both," Mace said, giving them a small smile. Adi followed him, her mouth ajar.

"Master Windu, what are you doing?" Adi asked.

"Well discuss this back on the ship. But master Yoda was right. It would be wrong of us to take them," Mace replied.

Anakin and Padme looked equally as shocked, but relief washed over their faces. Anakin took Luke from her and wrapped his free arm around her. Padme kissed him passionately and he could feel the happiness and joy flowing through her.

"I love you Ani," she said, as she kissed him again.

"I love you too angel," he replied. Together, with their children in their arms, they trekked back to the house.

On the distant, dark world of Korriban, two females charged at each other. Their crimson lightsabers clashing together furiously. For the last six months, Darth Psion had been training on this desolate world with one her master's top assassins. And Asaaj Ventress had taught her well, as she was ready to do her master's bidding. Their clashing lightsabers ceased and the blades were extinguished.

"I am ready," Darth Psion said.

"You are ready when I say you are ready," Ventress spat back at her.

"No master Ventress, I am ready, because master Sidious says I am," Psion said darkly, as she ignited her saber. Before Ventress could react, Psion plunged the crimson blade through her heart. Indeed...she had taught her well...

Evil Strikes

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here.

AN: Here is chapter 13! Thanks for all the great reviews so far!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 13: Evil Strikes

Anakin and Padme came inside with the twins. They saw Sabe sitting by herself in the sitting room. There was a sad, dejected look on her face. Anakin and Padme exchanged glances. Anakin smiled and took the twins to the nursery. Padme sat down next to Sabe and gave her a gentle hug.

"How did you do it Padme?" Sabe asked.

"Do what?" Padme questioned.

"How did you deal with Anakin being out in that war. How did you deal with hardly ever seeing him and not knowing if he was okay?" Sabe cried. Padme hugged her again.

"Honestly, I don't know how I did it sometimes. Throwing myself into my work helped a bit, but I constantly worried. I know what you're going through Sabe, but you have to believe that he'll be okay and that he'll come back to you," Padme replied.

"I'm trying, it's just so hard," Sabe said.

"I know, believe me. There were so many nights that I cried myself to sleep. After dinner, why don't you let me make you some tea to help you relax. That always helped me get to sleep a little easier," Padme suggested.

"Thanks, I think I'll take you up on that later," Sabe smiled. Padme smiled back and hugged her again.

"I'm going to go freshen up before dinner," Sabe said, as she dried her eyes and headed for her room. Padme went into the nursery where her husband was watching the twins play in their play pin.

"Is she okay?" Anakin asked. Padme came up to him and wrapped her arms around his waist.

"She'll be okay. But she'll be better when Obi-Wan returns. She's so worried and she misses him so much. And I know exactly how she feels," Padme replied.

"He'll be fine, I know it. He has a lot more to come back to now," Anakin said.

"I hope you're right," Padme replied.

"When I was out there fighting, you were what kept me going. All I could think about was staying alive so I could come back to you. Thoughts of coming back to Sabe will keep him going as well," Anakin said. She smiled and kissed him softly.

Korriban. Also known as the Sith home world. It was their latest lead on the Separatist leaders.

'Fitting,' Barriss thought to herself. It seemed very fitting for the Sith to hide the fugitive on their home world. She had heard about Korriban as a padawan in the temple. The dark side hung so heavily over the entire planet that it could not sustain life of any kind. The planet was barren and dead. She had heard the masters say that the dark side was so strong there that even the most powerful masters could give in to its pull if they remained too long.

"Master, I'm sensing the dark side so strongly, even from up here in space," Barriss said.

"I am as well my former padawan. We shall contact the council before we disembark. We must be cautious and on our guard at all time," Luminara said. Barriss nodded, while her master opened up a com channel with the Jedi Council.

Inside an old, rundown Sith temple, the Separatist leaders discussed their plans to begin constructing what master Sidious had called the death star. It was his ultimate weapon. Darth Psion entered the cold room and looked around, eyeing each individual.

"Ah, Lady Psion, when will master Sidious be contacting us? We must begin construction at once!" Viceroy Gunray said. Reaching deeply into the dark side of the Force, Psion sealed all the exits, before igniting her blood red saber.

"I'm sorry viceroy, but my master has chosen to terminate his dealings with you," she said coldly, as she ran him through the chest with her saber.

"He won't be needing the rest of you either!" Psion said angrily. Screams of terror filled the chamber, as Darth Psion viciously slaughtered every one of them in cold blood. And she enjoyed every single scream of terror and pain filled expression. She let their fear wash over her, delving deeply into the dark side...

"Masters, Barriss and I are in orbit of Korriban. We are sensing very dark tremors in the Force, coming from the planet. We believe we have located one of the Sith," Luminara reported.

"Investigate you will, but take great caution you must," Yoda said.

"We are sending master Kenobi to rendevous with you, as he is less than a parsec away. Proceed and he will join you soon. May the Force be with you," Mace said, as the transmission ended.

Zara smirked, satisfied with her work. The image of Darth Sidious appeared and he silently surveyed the carnage around her. Her transformation into a body of evil had went better than even he expected. Sending her to Korriban had been a very good decision, as it allowed the dark side to consume her completely. He no longer sensed any trace of the confused padawan. Before him stood a valuable and dedicated apprentice, ready and willing to perform any dark task that he might ask.

"You have done well my apprentice," Sidious said.

"Thank you my master. The plans for the death star are safe and Nute Gunray and his entourage have been disposed of," Psion reported.

"Good, transmit the plans to governor Tarkin. I sense you will soon have more company," Sidious said.

"I'll transmit the plans at once. And yes, I sense my former master has arrived. What are your orders, my master?" Psion asked.

"Dispose of them. They are of no consequence. However, I have heard that master Kenobi is en route to Korriban. Capture him, for he shall be very useful to us both," Sidious said. Psion smirked evilly.

"Yes my master," she replied, and bowed as the transmission ended.

The sun had set completely and the Naboo sky became dotted with stars as the sky darkened to a midnight blue. Padme quietly shut the door to the nursery, while stuffing the baby monitor comlink in her pocket. She was met by her handsome, albeit grease covered husband. Lately, in addition to keeping up on his light saber skills, he had been taking jobs fixing things here and there for local people around the village. Word was spreading quickly about Anakin's uncanny ability to fix anything. Now, he was spending a lot of time in the lake house garage fixing whatever was brought to him. And he loved the satisfying work. The part he loved most though, was

coming home for the night to be with his beautiful wife and children. Normally he was home for good by dinner time, but tonight he had gone back to the garage for a bit, while Padme and Sabe spent some time together with the twins. Padme kissed him softly, but stopped his grease covered hands from getting smudges all over her.

"Oh no you don't. If you get me dirty, I'll have to take a shower too," Padme said.

"And that would be a bad thing?" he asked with a crooked smile. She smiled back.

"Well no, but I thought I would wait for you...in bed," she replied, as she sauntered into the bedroom. Anakin followed her and made way for the fresher.

"I won't be long," he called, as he shut the door.

Anakin came out of the fresher with a towel wrapped around his waist and was faced by his stunningly beautiful wife. She had a very sad look on her face.

"What's wrong angel?" he asked.

"I don't know. I just have a really bad feeling that something terrible is going to happen," she replied. Anakin winced slightly. She usually was able to pick up on a lot of his feelings, even though she wasn't a Jedi. She was stronger in the Force than most, but not nearly enough to be a Jedi. She could always read him though and she could always tell when something was wrong.

"I've been feeling a lot of dark tremors in the Force today. But I haven't really been able to make any sense of what they mean," he said, as he placed his hands on her smooth shoulders.

"I'm frightened Ani. I'm afraid we're going to lose people that we care about or that I'm going to lose you. I couldn't bare to lose you

Anakin," she said, desperately clinging to him.

"You won't lose me Padme, I promise," he said, as he captured her lips in a passionate kiss. He moved his lips slowly and sensually over hers, as if he were drinking in her very essence and memorizing her taste. He broke the kiss and noticed that the room was lit only with candle light, just how they liked it. She truly looked like an angel in the curve hugging, sleek white nightgown she was wearing. Her chocolate curls spilled around her shoulders. She never ceased to take his breath away. But he wasn't the only one doing the admiring. She let her eyes travel appreciatively over his lean muscles and broad, smooth chest. He was a delicious sight and he was hers. She sauntered toward him and wrapped her arms around his neck, slowly running her fingers through the damp hair around his neck.

"Sometimes I ask myself what I did to deserve you," he told her, as his eyes trailed all over her body.

"Well I'm yours and I always will be," she replied, as she began to place kisses all over his neck and chest. He pulled her body tightly against his and kissed her hungrily. She moaned, as he kissed her neck and shoulders. She reached for his towel and undid it, allowing it to fall to the floor.

"I need you Ani," she whispered to him, her eyes half lidded with desire. He brushed the straps down off her shoulders and let the nightgown fall to the floor in a puddle at her feet. Their lips met in a searing kiss, as they managed to find the way to bed. Padme arched herself toward him, as his lips traveled all over body, eliciting sighs and moans from her. He could feel her ragged breaths on his neck and shoulders, as he made love to her. She raked her fingers across his back, as he kissed her deeply, before moving his kisses to her neck and chest.

"Oh Anakin...Oh Ani," she moaned.

"I love...you so much...angel," he rasped, as he kissed her again, long and passionately. They lay facing each other, still pressed

together, as they gasped for air and began to come down from the incredible high their lovemaking had created.

"I love you so much Padme," Anakin said, as he rolled onto his back, bringing her with him. Padme laid her head against his chest.

"I love you too Ani," she said sleepily, as she drifted off to sleep. It was long before he fell asleep as well...

Luminara and Barriss' search led them to an old, run down Sith temple.

"Master, there is something going on inside there. I feel so much fear and anger," Barriss said, as the negative emotions assaulted her senses.

"We must be very cautious," Luminara said, as she and Barriss went inside. They both gasped, as they viewed the carnage of the Separatist leaders that littered the floor. A cloaked figure stood in the center of the room with their back turned to the two Jedi. The person ignited a crimson saber, causing Barriss and Luminara to ignite their green blades. The figure slowly turned around and lowered their hood. Barriss gasped in surprise and nearly dropped her saber.

"Hello master Offee, master Unduli. I've been expecting you," Psion said. Barriss looked into her padawan's hate filled blazing yellow eyes in disbelief.

"Zara, what has happened to you?" Barriss asked, still in shock.

"My name is no longer Zara Caelan, she is dead. I am Darth Psion," the Sith woman replied.

"No Zara, come back to the light and we'll help you," Barriss pleaded.

"Help me! HELP ME!" she yelled.

"You betrayed my feelings to the council and humiliated me in front of Anakin!" Psion yelled, hate flashing in her eyes.

"Zara, I only did what I thought was best for you," Barriss pleaded.

"Well, my new master has done what's best for me. I have incredible power at my finger tips and soon, I shall have everything else I desire," Psion said.

"This obsession you have with Anakin is quite unhealthy padawan. Now, you will come quietly with us or we will have to Force you," Luminara said. Psion cackled evilly.

"You will try masters, you will try," Psion relied, as she launched at them. Their sabers clashed wildly. Psion spun in the air, delivering a hard sidekick to Barriss. Psion didn't stop with that. She Force pushed Barriss and sent her crashing into the wall. Her lightsaber clattered to the floor, automatically shutting off. Luminara stared at the former Jedi. She had heard how gifted Zara was in the arts of hand to hand combat and self defense. Her first master had been an expert and she had trained extensively with him, as well as master Swan also. Now those abilities had been enhanced by the dark side. Their sabers clashed again and Psion's attacks were relentless, as she fed off her dark power. With a powerful crossing kick, she disarmed Luminara. She kicked the Jedi in the abdomen and then used a drop spin kick to sweep her feet out from under her. Luminara landed hard on the cold floor. Out of the corner of her eye, Psion could see Barriss painfully struggling to get up.

"You fought well master Unduli, but you were no match for the powers of the dark side," Psion said, as she brought her saber to Luminara's neck. With a clean swipe, she decapitated master Unduli, sending her headless body to a heap on the cold floor.

"Noooooooooo!" Barriss screamed. The Jedi Knight leapt up and called her saber to her hand. She charged at the Sith and their sabers clashed furiously. They both met each other with a Force

push and each fought for control. But Psion proved to be stronger. She forced Barriss to the ground and stood looming over her.

"You must pay for betraying me master Offee," Psion said, as her saber came crashing down. Barriss met it with her own, but Psion struck her with a powerful jolt of Force lightning. Barriss screamed in pain. Psion brought her saber up again and brought it crashing down again...

Obi-Wan Kenobi touched down on Korriban. As he exited the ship, an overwhelmingly dark tremor nearly brought him to his knees.

"Force no," Obi-Wan muttered, as he felt Luminara die. He ran, following his senses and was led to an old run down temple. As he started to enter, he felt Barriss' signature dip dangerously low. He hurried inside and prayed that he wasn't too late.

Darth Psion sensed Master Kenobi coming and quickly slipped into the shadows, cloaking her presence in the Force momentarily. Obi-Wan entered the control room and was sickened by the carnage. He rushed to Barriss and lifted her head.

"Master...Kenobi," she uttered.

"It's okay Barriss, save your strength," Obi-Wan said gently.

"Zara," Barriss said weakly.

"What about her?" Obi-Wan asked.

"Zara is...Sith," Barriss choked out. Obi-Wan's eyebrows shot up.

"A Sith?" Obi-Wan asked in disbelief. Barriss nodded.

"Anakin...family in great danger," Barriss managed to choke out in a distorted voice. Obi-Wan looked at the deep wound on her neck. Her

larynx had suffered irreparable damage. Her neck was cut severely and she was having trouble getting air. Barriss was dying.

"The Jedi...great danger," Barriss said, as her eyes turned glassy.

"Your death will not be in vain Barriss, I promise you," Obi-Wan said quietly.

"Good...bye Obi...Wan. Tell Anakin...Padme...take care...of those...sweet...babies," Barriss choked out, as her eyes rolled back in her head and she died. Obi-Wan bowed his head in grief, but suddenly felt a dark presence enter the room.

"Zara, how could you do this?" Obi-Wan asked.

"My name is Darth Psion," she said, as she ignited her saber. Obi-Wan stood and ignited his blue blade.

"So now, you're going to try and kill me too," Obi-Wan said. She laughed evilly.

"No, you're too useful to kill yet master Kenobi. No, I need you to bait the one I'm really interested in," Psion replied.

"Anakin will never love you, so you may as well stop diluting yourself," Obi-Wan replied.

"He'll see things my way...eventually," Psion replied.

"Oh yes, killing his friends is really going to get him to come around to you. I'll warn you right now. If you try to harm his family, he'll kill you and I'll be there helping him," Obi-Wan replied.

"We shall see Master Kenobi, we shall see," Psion said, as she launched at him. Sabers clashed furiously, as the battle ensued.

Anakin woke up in a cold sweat, his chest heaving. Tears streamed down his cheeks.

"Ani, Ani, what's wrong?" Padme asked, as she shook his shoulders. Anakin looked at her, as the tears continued to come. Padme pulled his head to her chest, and stroked her fingers through his hair as he cried.

"They're dead..." Anakin said.

"Who Ani?" Padme asked.

"Master Unduli and Barriss. I saw them die in my sleep and I felt them too," Anakin replied.

"Do you know who killed them?" Padme asked. He shook his head.

"No, I couldn't see a face, but they were a Sith. And now..." Anakin stopped.

"What is it Ani?" Padme asked.

"Master Obi-Wan is facing the Sith. He was with Barriss as she died, I saw it," Anakin replied.

"Oh Anakin, I'm so sorry baby. But Obi-Wan is strong, we have to believe that he'll defeat the Sith," Padme said, as rocked him gently.

"I hope so angel," he replied.

"Do you think we should contact Master Yoda in the morning and tell them that you saw a Sith in your vision? Perhaps they know where the three of them were," Padme suggested. He gave her a gentle smile and kissed her softly.

"That's a good idea angel," he replied. Suddenly, they heard one of the twins fussing over the comlink.

"I'll get him, you go back to sleep," Anakin said, as he kissed her tenderly again.

"Are you sure?" Padme asked. He smiled and nodded.

"Positive, I'm not very tired anymore," Anakin replied. Padme nodded and watched him pull on his pants and leave for the nursery. She laid back down and found that she was also having trouble going back to sleep...

Rescue Mission

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here cause it's fun.

AN: Here's chapter 14! Thanks for all the great reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 14: Rescue Mission

Anakin gave his son a perplexed look, as he pushed the bottle away and squirmed restlessly in Anakin's arms. It was nearly dawn and Anakin stood out on the balcony in the arm morning air with his son. He knew both of his children were strong in the Force. But despite their identical midichlorian counts, Luke seemed to possess more of an awareness of the Force's presence, even at his tender age of six months. Could he have been picking up on what Anakin was sensing?" Anakin looked down and saw his son looking out toward the lake, grinning from ear to ear. Anakin looked up and was astonished to see Qui-Gon's Force spirit standing there in front of him.

"Master Qui-Gon?" Anakin asked in disbelief.

"Hello Anakin. And hello Luke," Qui-Gon said. Anakin smiled, as he heard Luke giggle.

"Obi-Wan's in danger, isn't he master?" Anakin asked.

"I'm afraid so Anakin. The Sith Lord has trained a powerful new apprentice. You must protect your family," Qui-Gon said.

"I wish we knew who the Sith Lord was. He has eluded us for so long," Anakin sighed.

"Anakin, the Force may have chosen you to defeat the Sith, but it has chosen to give you a partner to help you," Qui-Gon said.

"You mean Padme," Anakin replied.

"You both have the means needed to uncover the Sith Lord's identity," Qui-Gon replied. Anakin's eyebrows creased in confusion.

"What about Obi-Wan. I just can't forget about him, he's like a brother to me," Anakin said.

"Like I said before, you must protect your family. Let your heart guide you young one, it has not failed you yet," Qui-Gon said, as he disappeared. Anakin sighed deeply and looked down, only to see that Luke was fast asleep. He took him inside and put him in his crib, before going to take a shower. He and Padme had a lot to figure out today.

Blue clashed with red, as Obi-Wan fought the female Sith. The battle had been pushed outside the old temple and onto the many rocky outcrops that covered the dead, rock and sand covered planet. Sweat poured down Obi-Wan's face, as he fought to meet and evade the woman's fierce and hate driven attacks.

"It seems that the great General Kenobi is tiring," Psion mocked.

"I assure you Psion, I am far from finished," Obi-Wan retorted.

"We'll see," she replied, as she thrust her saber at him again. Obi-Wan met it with his, as the sabers hissed and crackled in their deadlock. Psion brought her leg up and delivered a roundhouse kick to Obi-Wan's ribs. He cried out in pain, as he stumbled back. He quickly brought his saber back up to meet hers, as she brought it crashing down on him. Obi-Wan gritted his teeth, as he fought her for control of the situation.

"You fought well Master Kenobi. Much better than your pitiful colleagues," Psion taunted.

"Shut up," Obi-Wan spat. Psion shot Force lightning at him. Obi-Wan absorbed it with his saber. Psion jumped and delivered a spinning kick, hitting Obi-Wan in the face, drawing blood from his lip. Obi-Wan fell to the ground with a hard thud and Psion shot him with a jolt of Force lightning. Obi-Wan cried out in agony, as his body writhed in pain. The Sith then secured a pair of Force resistant cuffs on his wrists.

"Come Master Kenobi. It's time to record a distress message for the council. One that I'm positive that will somehow make it to Anakin," Psion said.

"You won't get away with this Psion," Obi-Wan protested.

"Oh, but I will. Everything will play out as my master has foreseen it," Psion said...

Later that morning, Padme and Anakin sat in the sitting room with the twins. Sabe and Typho had gone to the market in Theed.

"Ani, what's wrong? Is that dream still bothering you?" Padme asked.

"I saw master Qui-Gon through the Force this morning. Master Obi-Wan is in trouble, I just don't know where he is," Anakin replied.

"Are you going to contact master Yoda?" she asked. He nodded.

"What else is bothering you?" she asked.

"Qui-Gon also told me that you and I have the means necessary to discover who the Sith Lord is. I just don't know what he means," Anakin replied. Padme thought for a long moment.

"Maybe it's possible that we could find something in the database. When I found that information about your mother, I was only using one of Artoo's encryption keys. Perhaps, if we have Artoo and

Threepio hack in to the mainframe themselves, we might be able to find the source of all this," Padme said. Anakin smiled.

"You're a genius angel," he replied, as he kissed her cheek and stood up.

"I'm going to get them hooked into the mainframe and then contact master Yoda," Anakin said, taking Luke with him. Padme smiled, as she cradled a sleeping Leia.

Mace sighed deeply, as Obi-Wan's transmission blinked out.

"We have no one else to go rescue Obi-Wan, so I will go myself," Mace said. Yoda nodded gravely. Suddenly, the comm signaled that they had another transmission. Yoda turned it on and Anakin's face appeared on the screen.

"Skywalker?" Mace questioned.

"Hello masters. I'm sorry if I am interrupting you, but it's important to speak to you about," Anakin said, as he shifted Luke in his lap. Yoda smiled at the small child.

"What is it Anakin?" Mace asked. Anakin took a deep breath and told them about his dream and meeting with Qui-Gon.

"I need to know where he is masters. I think he's in terrible danger," Anakin said. Yoda and Mace exchanged glances.

"Received a transmission we did, just before you called, " Yoda said.

"Obi-Wan has been captured by the Sith apprentice on Korriban" Mace said .

Korriban... Anakin made a mental note.

"Could not see the apprentice, for remained out of our view they did," Yoda said.

"I will be going to Korriban to deal with the Sith," Mace said.

"Masters, with all due respect, I think I should go also. The Force revealed this to me for a reason," Anakin interjected.

"Stay on Naboo with your family, you must," Yoda said.

"Obi-Wan is part of our family," Anakin argued.

"Anakin, I will be going to deal with the Sith. It is best that you stay out of these affairs," Mace replied. Anakin's jaw clenched, but he pushed down his frustration.

"Yes masters," he said, as his transmission blinked out. Anakin had no intention of listening to them. He was going after Obi-Wan.

Padme and Sabe came into the room.

"What did they say?" Sabe asked.

"They received a transmission from Obi-Wan this morning. The Sith forced him to announce his capture to the council," Anakin said. Sabe put a hand to her mouth and a few tears escaped her eyes.

"Master Yoda told me to stay put, but I'll be damned if I just sit around and wait for someone else to rescue him," Anakin said.

"We're coming with you," Padme announced.

"Absolutely not," Anakin replied.

"Why not?" Padme asked.

"It's way too dangerous. And what about the twins?" Anakin asked.

"Mom and Sola would be happy to take them for a few days. And Captain Typho can watch security at my parent's house," Padme said.

"No way," Anakin protested.

"Anakin, if you had been captured, there is nothing in this galaxy that could keep Padme from coming after you. And nothing is going to keep me from going after Obi-Wan," Sabe said. Anakin sighed deeply.

"She's right Ani, nothing would keep me from you. We're coming with you or we'll follow you anyway. You choose," Padme replied. Anakin rolled his eyes.

"You don't even know where I'm going and I'm not going to tell you," Anakin replied.

"I overheard master Yoda say Obi-Wan was on Korriban," Padme replied.

'Sithspit.' He swore that the woman had supersonic hearing sometimes. He ran a hand through his sandy blonde hair.

"Fine. We're dropping the twins off and leaving in an hour," Padme smiled and kissed him quickly, before going to get the twins ready.

An hour and a half later, they made the jump to hyperspace and the course was set for Korriban. From Coruscant it would take Mace almost ten hours to get to Korriban. Because their Nubian cruiser was faster and were coming from Naboo, they would be able to make the trip in five hours. Saying goodbye to the twins had been hard for them both, but they assured Sola that they would return soon and with Obi-Wan in tow. Anakin flipped on the light, telling everyone it was okay to unhook their restraints. He put the ship on auto pilot and went in back. Both Artoo and Threepio were still logged in to the Senate mainframe database, unlocking files and searching for answers. Suddenly, Artoo began beeping wildly.

"What is it?" Anakin asked.

"It seems that Artoo and I have uncovered several audio recordings from the Sith Lord himself," Threepio said.

"Coming from the Senate building?" Padme asked.

"Yes Miss Padme," Threepio replied.

"Could you pinpoint where it came from specifically inside the building?" Anakin asked. Artoo chirped his response.

"Oh dear, are you sure Artoo?" Threepio asked. He blooped again.

"It seems that they originate from the Supreme Chancellor's office," Threepio said. A cold chill rippled down Anakin's spine. Sabe and Padme looked horrified.

"Play a transmission Threepio," Anakin said.

"Yes master Ani. The first one in this particular log dates back to almost four years ago," Threepio said.

"About the same time my mother died," Anakin said. Padme squeezed his shoulder.

" *What do you have to report Zeel?" the scratchy voice said.*

" *Skywalker's mother was delivered to the Tuskan cap," Zeel reported.* The transmission ended and the next one began.

" *Lord Tyrannus, is she dead?" Sidious asked.*

" *Unfortunately no, Amidala still lives," Tyrannus replied.*

" *Her death is instrumental in turning Skywalker," Sidious said.*

" *She will die my master, I promise you," Dooku replied.*

" *She and Skywalker will arrive on Geonosis, I have foreseen it. She must die," Sidious said.*

" *Yes my master," Tyrannus said, as the transmission ended.*

Anakin sank to his knees, a look of utter disbelief present on his features. Padme gave Sabe a sad look.

"This whole thing is my fault. I put him in power," Padme said.

"No, it's not your fault Padme, he manipulated you," Sabe replied.

"She's right angel. He's been using and manipulating us all…and I almost played right into his hands. He's been using me since day one and I almost fell for it" Anakin said, raising his voice in frustration and anger at Palpatine. Seeing that Padme needed some time alone with Anakin, she excused herself and went to her cabin. Padme knelt down beside him and took his face in her hands. She brushed the unruly blonde locks that she loved from his eyes.

"None of this is your fault either Ani. He's been fooling us all, even the council," Padme said.

"But he was going to turn me. If it wasn't for you, I would have let him. He would have used you against me somehow," Anakin said, as suddenly a realization dawned on him.

"What is it Ani?" Padme asked.

"You weren't supposed to be there that day on the Imperial Hand. Palpatine didn't want you there. He wanted me to kill Dooku, so he could make me his next apprentice. And you saved me from that fate Padme," Anakin said. She smiled faintly.

"Guess I was in the wrong place at the right time," Padme replied.

"if you hadn't been there, I would have killed Dooku for revenge. Then Palpatine would have found some way to use you against me. Who knows what terrible things I would have done," Anakin lowered his head in shame.

"You look at me Anakin Skywalker," she demanded. He looked up, as she softly caressed his chiseled, handsome face with her hands.

"There will be no more discussion on what could have happened or what might have happened. Our love save us then and I will save us again, always. I know I've said it before, but have faith in our love Ani, for it will always be enough to save us," Padme told him, while looking deeply into his sapphire eyes. She crushed her lips to his with a searing, passionate kiss. She kissed him long and hard, until they were forced to break it in order to breath. Anakin cradled her face in his hands.

"I don't deserve you angel," he told her.

"Yes you do baby, we're meant to be," Padme replied, as she kissed his forehead.

A few hours alter, Anakin landed their ship on Korriban. He hooked his saber to his belt.

"I need you both to stay here in the ship. I'll be back with Obi-Wan," Anakin said.

"Wait a minute, do you really expect us to stay here?" Padme protested.

"Please angel, I need to know that you're safe," Padme nodded reluctantly.

"Artoo, stay by the controls. I want you to be able to get us out of here in a hurry if we have to. Threepio, you stay with Padme and Sabe. I'll be back soon," he said, as he kissed his wife tenderly.

"Please be careful Ani," Padme pleaded. He gave her a crooked smile, before kissing her quickly again. He left the ship and began trekking our onto the rocky terrain. Reaching into the Force, he followed Obi-Wan's Force signature.

Inside the rundown, old temple, Psion had moved Obi-Wan to what looked like an audience chamber. Obi-Wan was suspended in the air, arms and legs bound, much like they had been when he was held prisoner on Geonosis. Psion smiled evilly.

"It seems that he took the bait. Anakin is on his way here right now, I know you feel it to. He's in for the surprise of his life when he gets here," Psion said.

'Blast it Anakin, what are you doing here? Go back," Obi-Wan thought mentally. But because of the Force restraints, he knew the message would not be heard. And even if it was, he knew Anakin wouldn't listen.

Anakin soon reached the old temple. He could sense that his master was inside and he quickly entered, his lightsaber swinging readily at his side…

Battle of Korriban

Disclaimer: It's George's sandbox. I just play here, because it's fun!

AN: Thanks for all the great reviews!

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 15: Battle of Korriban

Padme and Sabe exited their cabins. Both wore traditional Nubian battle jumpsuits like the one Padme had wore during the battle of Geonosis. They both wore the traditional silver arm cuffs. Padme's was again white, signifying her high office. Sabe's was a dark maroon, signifying chief handmaiden. Both women had their hair pulled back in to a tight, intricate bun. Each holstered their fully charged blaster pistols.

"Miss Padme, master Ani would not approve of you leaving the ship. He's liable to deactivate me," Threepio said.

"Don't worry Threepio, we'll be back soon," Padme replied, as she and Sabe left.

Anakin slipped quietly into the audience chamber where Obi-Wan was being held. He felt around the room with his senses. It was apparent that the Sith was very good at stealth, because he could sense nothing. But he knew the Sith was there. He crept slowly over to Obi-Wan and began examining his restraints in order to see how to free him.

"Anakin, what are you doing here?" Obi-Wan scolded. Anakin smirked.

"It's nice to see you too master," Anakin replied.

"Anakin, you don't understand. This whole thing is a trap for you and I was the bait! You have to get out of here now!" Obi-Wan pleaded.

"Trap or not, I'm not leaving without you master," Anakin replied, as he ignited his silver bladed saber and cut Obi-Wan down.

"Such loyalty, I admire that in a man," a female voice said. Anakin turned to the cloaked figure slowly.

"You must be the new Sith apprentice," Anakin said, his saber humming. She pushed her hood down and Anakin nearly dropped his saber.

"Zara?" he asked in disbelief. She smiled evilly, as her yellow eyes surveyed his form up and down. Her intense appraisal focused on him began to make him very uncomfortable.

"Actually, these days they are calling me Darth Psion," she replied.

"Why did you turn Zara? The Sith will only cause you pain and suffering!" Anakin tried to reason with her.

"She turned, because of her jealousy and obsession with you and her anger and hate toward the Jedi. Isn't that right Zara?" Obi-Wan asked. She snarled at him.

"Shut up Kenobi. The Jedi and Master Offee betrayed me! And I had no one, because you chose Amidala over us!" she pointed angrily at Anakin.

"My master has taught me all I need to know to enact my revenge. He has trained me in the dark side and I am more powerful than you can imagine!" she yelled. Anakin looked at her in disbelief. Once she had been his friend, but now he found no trace of Zara in the hate filled yellow eyes.

"Zara, it's not too late to come back to the light. Let us help you," Anakin pleaded.

"I don't need help from the Jedi. Kenobi was right about one thing though. This was a trap for you Anakin and you'll be leaving this planet with me," Psion said.

"We'll see about that," Anakin said, as he swung his saber into ready position.

Anakin and Psion launched at each other, sabers clashing in a furious array of spins, parries and arcs. Obi-Wan cursed for losing his saber to Psion and now he was reduced to watching Anakin battle the Sith. Suddenly, movement caught his eyes and he turned, seeing Padme and Sabe crouched behind a couple of control panels. Seeing that Psion was occupied, he crept over to them.

"What in blazes are you two doing here!" he yelled in hushed whisper.

"We came after you and Anakin of course," Padme whispered back.

"You don't understand Padme. If she sees you, she'll try to kill you or use you against Anakin," Obi-Wan said.

"Who is she?" Sabe asked.

"Zara has turned, she is the new Sith apprentice. Now go, both of you!" Obi-Wan urged.

"Too late Kenobi," Psion said, as she turned Anakin's saber to the side and kicked him in the chest, knocking the wind out of him. While he was thrown off balance, Psion shot Force lightning at them. Obi-Wan pushed them behind the console, as the lightning struck the panel. It sparked violently and slowly caught on fire.

"PADME!" Anakin yelled. He swung his saber and met Psion's again.

"Leave her out of this," Anakin warned her through clenched teeth.

"Oh I don't think so. You've saved me the trouble of coming to Naboo to kill you Senator!" Psion called to her.

"Get them out of here master!" Anakin called. Obi-Wan pushed them both ahead of him and toward the exit. Obi-Wan opened the door, but they found Zeel Wessell standing there, crimson saber blazing in her hand. Obi-Wan recoiled away from the entrance, pushing both women behind him. Sabe drew her blaster and pointed it at the assassin.

"Sabe, no!" Obi-Wan called. Zeel Force pulled the weapon from her and Force pushed her into the wall. She hit it hard and collapsed to the floor, unconscious.

"SABE!" Obi-Wan yelled.

Zeel tried to Force push Obi-Wan, but he met it with his own push. Zeel felt herself being pushed back and she knew that she could not beat Kenobi when it came to using the Force. And Psion didn't want him dead yet, so she pressed a small button on her comlink. Rolling through the door came four Droidekas. They stood up on their mechanical legs and took aim, while Padme drew her blaster.

"Drop the blaster Senator. Psion wants you and Kenobi alive for now, but she does not care about your friend," Zeel spat. Immediately Obi-Wan ceased his Force push and Padme dropped her blaster. The clashing of lightsabers could still be heard, as Anakin and Psion continued to fight furiously. Zeel placed the Force cuffs on Obi-Wan and then turned to Padme. Zeel snarled and wrapped her hand around Padme's throat.

"Darth Psion wants the pleasure of killing you. It's a pity, because I would take great pleasure in doing in myself," Zeel snarled.

"PADME!" Anakin yelled, as he Force shoved Psion back. Psion was caught off guard and fell the ground, allowing Anakin to go after Zeel. Zeel released her and spun around to meet Anakin's saber with her own. Locked in a deadlock, they circled slowly so that Anakin was soon standing in front of Padme. By now, Psion had recovered and was now heading toward them. The droidekas moved in to position.

Anakin and Padme were surrounded. Anakin stepped back a bit from them and wrapped his arm around Padme's waist.

"You're surrounded Anakin, surrender to us," Psion said. Suddenly, blaster bolts took out two of the droidekas before they could raise their shields. Everyone looked over to see that Sabe had woke up and recovered her blaster.

"You'll pay for that milady...or at least the dear Senator will," Zeel said, as she glanced at Psion for approval. Psion nodded and suddenly, Padme was clutching her throat.

"NO! STOP IT NOW!" Anakin yelled, as he extinguished his saber and held Padme in his arms. Reaching into the Force, he tried to sever Zeel's grip on Padme's throat. He managed to alleviate some of the grip, but was still fighting Zeel back. Padme opened her eyes weakly and stared up into Anakin's sapphire eyes.

"Hang in there angel, don't leave me," Anakin pleaded.

"Surrender to me Anakin, and Zeel will release her," Psion said. Padme shook her head no at Anakin, her eyes pleading him not to give in to the Sith's demands. Suddenly, a purple blade pierced through, slicing off Zeel's outstretched limb at the forearm. She recoiled and screamed in horror and pain. Padme gasped for air and Anakin held her close, as she clung to him while getting her air back.

"Master Windu...what a surprise," Psion said.

"This foolishness will end now Zara," Mace said. She smirked.

"Oh no Master Windu, it's just begun," Psion replied, as she faced off with Master Windu. Anakin ushered Padme to the side, as he circled with Zeel. Her injury was weakening her fast and she fell to the floor in exhaustion. Anakin's saber hummed by her neck, as he looked down at her. She raised her saber and clashed with Anakin again. He brought his saber around and severed her other arm at the

forearm and her saber clattered the floor. She fell to her knees, as Anakin's saber hummed in her ear.

"I'm unarmed. You didn't kill count Dooku and you won't kill me," she smirked. Anakin hesitated and looked around. The fire was spreading through the room and he knew they would have to get out of here soon.

"You're the one that kidnaped my mother and you're the one who tried to murder my wife. But you're not worth it," Anakin said, as he extinguished his saber and confiscated hers. He threw it into the fire and went to Padme. They rushed to Obi-Wan and Sabe and Anakin freed Obi-Wan from the restraints.

Psion fought furiously with the Jedi Master and Mace could clearly see that he had underestimated the Sith. Whatever training she had undergone in the last six months had changed her into a deadly warrior with a wealth of knowledge in the dark side.

"You're wondering how I got so good, aren't you master? I learned much from Asaaj Ventress. In fact she taught me everything she knew and then I killed her, just like I'm going to kill you," Psion said.

"I don't think so," Mace replied.

"Oh, I do!" Psion yelled, as she jumped into the air and scissor kicked Mace. He fell flat on his back and Psion's red blade hummed above him. She shot Force lightning at him, which Mace blocked with his saber. This sent the lightning shooting around the room, sparking any electrical equipment and causing more flames to start. Psion realized that she needed to get out and soon. She would have to reorganize her plans and go after Anakin later.

"You live for today, but I'll hunt you all down and I won't stop until I have everything I want," she said, as he eyes bored in to Anakin.

"Lady Psion, we must escape," Zeel rasped, as she stumbled to her. Psion looked at her in disgust.

"You have failed me Zeel. You were supposed to defeat Anakin and administer the Ysalamiri serum to him. But you couldn't do that. You couldn't even get rid of the Senator or Kenobi! You are worthless!" Psion said angrily, as she passed her saber through Zeel's neck, decapitating her. Psion smirked sadistically and kicked the body into the flames, burning it. Padme covered her mouth in horror at the gruesome scene. She turned and buried her face in Anakin's chest.

"She's pure evil," Anakin said sadly, knowing there was likely no hope for her. The Sith apprentice made her quick exit, leaving them in the fire engulfed room. Obi-Wan and Sabe were with Mace near the exit and they called for Anakin and Padme.

"Anakin! We have to get out now! The fire is out of control!" Obi-Wan called to him over the inferno. Anakin nodded and took Padme's hand, as they started running. Suddenly, Anakin pulled Padme back, as the violent flames flared up higher than their heads. Anakin looked up and pulled himself and Padme back, as a fiery beam fell to the floor. Padme screamed and clung to him. Her face was splotched with soot, as was his. And her hair was in disarray, but she still looked so beautiful to him.

"We're trapped Ani," she cried. Anakin looked around the room and spotted another exit at the other side of the room. The flames weren't as bad over there yet.

"Not yet, we'll just find another way out," he said, as he pulled her up with him.

"Obi-Wan, we'll find another way out! Get out of here and we'll meet you at the ship!" Anakin called over the flames. Reluctantly, he Sabe and Mace left through the exit, while Anakin and Padme ran for the other exit. Anakin pressed the control panel, but the door jammed. He banged on the panel, but still nothing happened. He thrust his saber through the door, melting through it until he was able to pry it open. He and Padme ran through, but stopped short, as they found that the bridge to the other side was not extended. Padme screamed, as she nearly fell over the edge. Anakin grabbed her

around the waist and held her tightly. He tried the control panel to extend the bridge, but it didn't work either.

"Peace of junk, nothing works," Anakin said, as he took out his extending cable from his utility belt. He tossed it up and hooked it securely on a high beam. Padme wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed his cheek, while he wrapped his free arm around her waist.

"Hang on tight angel," he said, as he swung them across theabyss and to other side. He pried the door open and they ran through, finding yet another room and still no way out. The stopped to catch their breath.

"We're not getting anywhere. I think we need to go up," Anakin pointed to the hatch on the ceiling. Using the Force, he pushed the hatch open. He used the Force and floated Padme up so she could grab onto the side of hatch and pull herself through. She began climbing up through the vent system. Anakin used the Force to propel him up through the opening and he began climbing right behind her. The finally reached the top and pushed the hatch open. They climbed out onto the roof of the old temple and out into the dry, dead air of Korriban. As he used the Force to propel himself and Padme down to the ground, they saw what he assumed was Psion's ship leaving the atmosphere. He took Padme's hand and they headed for their waiting ship.

Psion set the coordinates for Coruscant and jumped to hyperspace. Once she was secure, she opened a comm channel with her master.

"What do you have to report?" Darth Sidious asked.

"The separatist leaders are dead, as are master Offee and master Unduli. But master Windu showed up unexpectedly and Skywalker and the others escaped," Psion said.

"It is of no consequence. There will be other opportunities for you to seize Skywalker and kill Amidala. You have done well my young apprentice," Sidious said.

"Thank you my master," she replied.

"When you get back to Coruscant, it will be time to move into the next phase of our plan," Sidious informed her.

"Yes master, I shall see you soon," she replied, as the transmission blinked out.

Tired and out of breath, Anakin and Padme arrived at their ship. Obi-Wan pulled them in. Mace was there and had not left on his own ship yet.

"Anakin, Master Yoda and I specifically told you not to come here," Mace said.

"I'm sorry master, but I couldn't just forget about Obi-Wan. He's like my brother and I am no longer a Jedi, therefore I am not bound by your orders," Anakin shot back.

"Not like you ever listened to us anyway," Mace grumbled, as he dug through his pack and pulled out an lightsaber. He handed it to Obi-Wan and he immediately recognized it as Anakin's old one.

"Use this until you can build a replacement," Mace said. Obi-Wan nodded and had every intension of building a new one and giving this one back to Anakin. He had a feeling that one of Anakin's children would be using it someday.

"Masters, we have something that you need to know," Anakin said.

"What is it Anakin?" Obi-Wan asked.

"We've discovered the identity of the Sith Lord," Anakin announced.

"Are you sure?" Mace asked. Anakin nodded.

"Artoo and Threepio hacked into the Senate mainframe and uncovered many audio transmission files from the Sith Lord. And they all originate from Supreme Chancellor Palpatine's office. The proof is all here," Anakin said, as he handed the data pad to Mace. Obi-Wan looked shocked.

"Palpatine? A Sith Lord?" Obi-Wan asked in disbelief.

"The dark side does surround the chancellor, but we assumed he was only a pawn," Mace replied.

"He is not the pawn master, he is the Sith master. And Zara, or Darth Psion is his new apprentice," Anakin told him.

"I will relay this information to the council on my way back to Coruscant. Obi-Wan, in light of this revelation, the Senate will need to meet. Please escort the acting Senator back to Coruscant, as it is not safe for Senator Amidala to be anywhere near Coruscant. Anakin, you and the Senator should return to Naboo. Anakin nodded, as he had no intention of taking Padme anywhere near Psion or Palpatine.

"I don't like this idea of you both going back to Coruscant," Padme protested.

"We'll be fine Padme, I promise," Sabe assured her.

"I agree with Padme. I have a really bad feeling about this master," Anakin replied. Obi-Wan placed a hand on his shoulder.

"We'll be fine Anakin and we'll be in contact with you soon. Go home to Naboo and wait to hear from us. We may have to send you and your family into hiding very soon," Obi-Wan said gravely. Anakin nodded silently and hugged his master. Sabe hugged Padme and bid them both goodbye. Anakin and Padme strapped themselves in

and ordered Artoo to take off, as Anakin was far too tired to help him fly the ship. But they figured Artoo could handle everything.

Master Windu's holographic image appeared to the council.

"Master Windu, good to see you it is," Master Yoda greeted. Master Yoda was also attending the meeting by hologram, as he was assisting the war situation on Kashyyyk.

"Greetings masters," Mace bowed.

"Were you able to defeat the Sith?" Adi asked.

"Unfortunately no, she was far more formidable than I expected. We rescued Obi-Wan and he is en route to Coruscant with Senator Sabe. Anakin and Padme have managed to uncover the identity of the Sith Lord," Mace said.

"Share this information with us, you must," Yoda said. Mace took a deep breath and explained Anakin and Padme's findings to the council. When he was finished, everyone present was in shock. The Sith had been right under their noses for the last fourteen years.

"We must remove the good Chancellor at once then," Adi said.

"Very cautious we must be. A powerful Sith he is, if able to hide from us like he was," Yoda warned.

"Master Koon, Master Mundi, and Master Tiin will accompany me," Adi said, as they rose and left. Yoda looked deeply troubled, as the his transmission blinked out. Chewbacca rawled in concern and Yoda looked at him sadly.

Once Obi-Wan had then safely in hyperspace, he turned the polit's chair to face Sabe who was behind him in the passenger seat of the two person star fighter. Sabe threw herself in his arms and hugged

him tightly. He hugged her back just as fiercely and he felt her tears on his neck.

"Sabe? What's wrong?" he asked, as he pulled her back to look in her eyes.

"I thought I was never going to see you again," she cried.

"Shhh...I know. There were times that I thought the same. Truthfully he had and many times he had cursed his former padawan, in a brotherly manner of course. How had he done it? How had he spent months away from the woman he loved? His former padawan had always lacked control, though Anakin had changed quite a bit since the birth of his children. No longer the restless, angry Jedi, but now a loving, devoted husband and father. He supposed Anakin made it through for the moments like this where he was reunited with the woman he loved. He pushed all other thoughts out of his mind, as Sabe's lips drew closer to his. They kissed for the first time since their separation and it was sweet and passionate. Sabe climbed into Obi-Wan's lap, deepening and intensifying the kiss.

"I love you Obi-Wan," she said breathlessly.

"I love you too Sabe...no matter what it means," Obi-Wan replied, as their lips met again...

Anakin and Padme unstrapped their restraints as soon as Artoo gave them the okay. Anakin held his side and hissed in pain a bit.

"Ani, are you hurt?" she asked, as she lifted up his tunic to look at his side.

"It's just a saber burn, nothing I'm not used to," he replied, giving her a smile.

"It's not nothing. Sit down, while I go get some bacta cream. We can't have it getting infected," she ordered. He rolled his eyes and

sat down, knowing that she loved doting over his injuries no matter how minor they were. And truthfully, he didn't mind it much himself. She quickly came back and lifted his leather vest over his head and began unbuttoning his dark brown tunic. Anakin let his eyes drink in her appearance.

"I thought I was going to lose you. Why didn't you stay on the ship?" he asked.

"You should know me better than that Ani. I'm not about to let you go off to fight, while I stay and worry myself to death about you. I've done enough of that," she replied, as she applied the bacta to his wound. He hissed in pain, as she rubbed it in the burn, but it wasn't long before the painkillers kicked in. She placed a large, gauzy bandage over it and then went to rinse the bacta off her hands. He followed her into the cabin and sat down on the couch, letting out a deep, relieved sigh that he and Padme both made it off Korriban okay. It was close and he knew that they had not seen the last of Psion. Padme came out of the refresher sat beside him, cuddling close. He wrapped his arms around her and pulled her into his lap so that she was straddling him. She caressed his smooth cheek with her hand.

"I thought I was going to be the one to lose you for a while," she told him.

"You won't lose me Padme, I promise," he told her, as he took her hand and kissed it.

"She won't stop hunting us, will she?" Padme asked, already knowing that the answer was no.

"Probably not, but I will train hard and I will defeat the Sith, I promise you. And in the meantime, I promise you that I'll protect you and the twins, even if it means we have..." he started, but didn't want to finish.

"Even if it means we have to leave Naboo. It's okay Ani, I'd follow you to the ends of the galaxy just to be with you," she replied. He smiled at her.

"I know you would, but I promise we won't leave Naboo unless we have no other choice," Anakin replied. Padme smiled and nodded, as her lips descended upon his. Her arms flew around his neck, as they kissed deeply and passionately. Anakin kissed her neck, hungrily tasting her. Padme raised her arms for him and he pulled her the soot smudged white top over her head. He drank in the sight of her and kissed her swollen lips again. Padme threw her head back, as he kissed down her neck and to her chest. Anakin shifted her in his lap and she allowed herself to tumble back onto the couch. He came with her, carefully covering her body with his own, as he angled his mouth over her, kissing her deeply and hungrily. They let their passion consume them and for a time, the Republic, the Sith, the Jedi, and everything else but them ceased to exist...

Order 66

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A Matter of Trust

Chapter 16: Order 66

Padme stirred and moaned sleepily. She smiled and pressed herself closer to Anakin, if that were possible, as she was already spooned against him. They hadn't even made it to the bed, as their desperation to be with each other had taken over, just as exhaustion had taken over after their passionate lovemaking. Suddenly, she heard a rapping at the cabin door.

"Master Ani, miss Padme, Artoo says we will be coming out of hyperspace in 20 minutes," Threepio said. Padme yawned deeply.

"Thanks Threepio," she called.

"Angel?" Anakin said in a sleepy voice.

"Threepio says we're almost home. I'm afraid we don't even have time for a shower, so it'll have to wait until we're home at the lake house," Padme said, as she reluctantly pulled herself from his embrace. They both threw on their clothes and left the cabin to strap themselves in for when Artoo brought them out of hyperspace and into orbit around Naboo.

Master Gallia and the other Jedi masters took care of the Chancellor's guards and marched into his office.

"Master Gallia, what can I do for you and your colleagues?" Palpatine asked.

"I think you know why we're here Chancellor Palpatine. Or do you prefer Darth Sidious?" Master Gallia asked cooly. Palpatine remained stoic for a moment.

"And just what do you plan to do with me Master Jedi?" he asked.

"You are under arrest Chancellor," Adi said, as she and the other three masters ignited their sabers.

"Are you threatening me, master Jedi?" Palpatine asked through clenched teeth.

"You can come quietly, or we shall take you by force. The Senate shall decide your fate," Mundi replied. Palpatine's produced his light saber and ignited it.

"I AM THE SENATE!" he yelled, as he did a corkscrew spin over his desk and engaged in battle with the four seasoned Jedi masters. Palpatine spun and met blades with Master Tiin first, while knocking Plo Koon out of the way. Their sabers clashed, but Palpatine proved to be a superior, as he plunged the saber through Saesee Tiin's heart. The Jedi master fell to the floor dead. But the other masters had no time for reaction to their friend's death, as Palpatine whirled around and met sabers with Ki-Adi Mundi and Plo Koon. He gave Plo Koon a hard Force push and with an incredible blast of Force lightning, the window of the Chancellor's office shattered and Plo Koon was thrust out the window and into the depths of Coruscant. Palpatine spun back and clashed sabers furiously with Adi Gallia and Ki-Adi Mundi. Suddenly, a figure cloaked in black swept into the room.

"Padawan Caelan," Mundi said.

"No master Mundi, I am Darth Psion," she said, as she swept her saber at him. He met it with his own and the sabers clashed furiously. But Ki-Adi Mundi was immediately amazed at the fierceness in the former padawan's attacks. Psion grew bored with

the fight and spun around. She brought her saber down hard on his neck, severing it from the rest of his body.

"Well done my young apprentice. You work so far has been commendable," Sidious said.

"Thank you my master," she replied.

"How could you do this Zara?" Adi growled. Psion smiled evilly.

"Oh, it was very easy master Gallia, easy just like killing you will be," she replied, as her saber hissed and cracked as it made contact with Adi's. Master Gallia fought furiously with the former padawan, but this woman did not fight like a Jedi. Her every move was deadly and evil marred her features. The woman before her was a Sith and there was no trace of the former padawan Zara Caelan.

"This has been nice master Gallia, but it's time for you to die so my

my master and I can continue with our plans," Psion said.

"I don't think so padawan," Adi replied. Psion growled.

"I am no longer a padawan!" Psion yelled, as she blasted master Gallia with an incredible wave of Force lightning. Jedi Master Adi Gallia was thrust out the window and fell to her death.

"Very well done, my apprentice. But we still have much to do," Palpatine said. Psion bowed to him.

"Yes my master, what is thy bidding?" she asked.

"We must execute order 66 before Kenobi, Windu and Yoda return. We will have to deal with them personally," Palpatine said.

"I am unsure of master Yoda's whereabouts, but Windu and Kenobi are likely still a couple hours away. And I am positive that Skywalker has returned to Naboo," she replied.

"Vert good. Take a legion on troops and storm the Jedi Temple. Leave no survivors," Sidious ordered, as he raised the comlink to his lips. Carefully adjusting it to the secret frequency, which would transmit to all clone troopers, he spoke into it.

"Execute order 66," Palpatine said.

"I will go at once master," Psion said.

"Very good. After you have completed you task at the temple, you may head for Naboo to deal with any personal matters that you wish to. Think of it as a reward for your work," Palpatine said.

"You are most generous my master," Psion smiled evilly, as did Palpatine. Never in a million years would he have realized that she would make a far better apprentice than Skywalker ever would have. He realized now that Skywalker's stupid attachment to that woman would have forever made him unstable and that he would have drifted back and forth between the light and dark sides. But padawan Caelan's jealous heart and obsession had made her a totally willing apprentice. She had welcomed the darkness, whereas Skywalker would have only done what he asked if he thought he would be able to save his wife by doing it. But Psion carried out her duties and loved doing his evil bidding. She was deadly and efficient. And now soon, the Jedi would be no more...

Senator Bail Organa and Senator Mon Mothma arrived at the Senate building together. The Chancellor had just called an emergency meeting of the Senate.

"Honorable representatives of the Republic systems, it is with a heavy heart that I bring us together today. A little over an hour ago, four Jedi masters made an assassination attempt on my life. Fortunately, they were thwarted and dealt with. It seems that the Jedi have been long planning to usurp my power and take control of the Senate for their own. But you can rest assured, as I have taken measures to ensure the traitorous Jedi don't do any harm to our

good Republic. Thanks to them, we nearly lost the war. But my top agent has tracked down the Separatists leaders herself and reprimanded them. The war is over, but I'm afraid it has left the Republic in shambles. It is time for change my friends. The Jedi order is being dissolved as we speak and those loyal to their cause are our enemies. We must protect ourselves from their corruption. Together, we shall build a grand Empire from the ashes of our Republic and we shall rise victorious over those that oppose our peace!" Palpatine stated. Mon Mothma, Bail, and a few other senators looked horrified, as they watched democracy die before their very eyes. Roars of applause echoed through the Senate chambers from those that approved of this course of action. Bail knew that he needed to do whatever he could to help the remaining Jedi. He knew that Obi-Wan, Mace Windu and Yoda were not on Coruscant right now and he needed to be the first one they saw when they arrived back on the planet. Suddenly, he was also very worried about Anakin and Padme. He had a feeling that they too were in grave danger...

Anakin and Padme arrived home at the lake house, where Sola was waiting for them with the twins. Upon seeing her little sister and her brother in law, she burst out laughing at their appearance. They were, to put it simply, a mess. She wondered why they hadn't had time to clean up on a five hour trip back from Korriban. Padme rolled her eyes at her sister. "Just what is so funny Sola?" Padme asked.

"You two are a mess. What were you doing on your trip back?" Sola asked playfully.

"We were...um...we were sleeping. We are very tired and you have no idea what we've been through," Padme replied, not making eye contact. Anakin smiled sheepishly.

"Uh huh, I'm sure that sleep is not all you did. The twins are fine with me for a little bit. Go get cleaned up you two," Sola said. Anakin and Padme nodded and kissed the twins before going into the house and

heading for their room. Sola shook her head at the young couple, as she watched them go hand in hand.

After they shared a long, hot shower together, they dressed and went to find Sola and the twins. They felt much better now.

"Well, that's better. I think there are two little twins here that are very happy to see their parents," Sola said. Luke and Leia beamed smiles at their parents and flailed their arms excitedly. And Anakin and Padme felt their hearts melt.

"Oh mommy and daddy missed you both so much," Padme cooed, as she picked up Luke and cuddled him. Anakin picked up his little angel and kissed her brown haired head. Then he turned seriously to Sola.

"Thank you Sola," Anakin said.

"Of course Anakin, what are aunt's for?" she smiled.

"There's something else we need you to do Sola," Anakin said, as he glanced at Padme. They both knew what they needed to do, as much as they hated it. Sola frowned, sensing the seriousness of the young couple's mood.

"What is it?" Sola asked.

"I don't know how much longer Naboo will be safe for us. We need you to go home and start packing," Anakin said.

"Tell mom and dad that we have to leave. Our ship isn't big enough for all 10 of us, but you and Darred, mom, dad and the girls should be able to fit on the family ship. Anakin will send Artoo with you so he can check the ship over," Padme said.

"You want us to leave Naboo?" Sola asked in shock.

"We don't have a choice Sola. She's been here and she knows where to find you if she wanted to get to us," Anakin said.

"And just who is this she?" Sola asked. Anakin sighed deeply.

"The new Sith apprentice. Zara turned to the dark side and I know she'll come after me. We have to leave for the outer rim and find another suitable planet to live on until the time to take her and her master down presents itself. In the past, I would have just rushed into battle without thinking and without listening to what the Force is telling me. But I have a family to protect and the Force is telling me that it is not the right time to strike the Sith. My family is the most important thing right now and I can't protect us on Naboo when all of our enemies know where we are," Anakin told her. Sola nodded sadly.

"I'll make sure we're ready to leave by tomorrow," Sola said, as she left. Padme laid her head on Anakin's shoulder, as they spent some quiet moments with their children.

Psion smirked with satisfaction at her work. For the most part, everyone in the temple was dead. She was aware that some of the escape pods were gone, but she assumed that some of the Knights had been successful at getting some of the younglings and padawans into them. It made no difference, for she would hunt down and destroy any Jedi that managed to escape their purge. No one would stand against her master's new empire. Smoke could be seen rising from the temple from all over Coruscant. It was a fair warning to anyone who thought of opposing to her master. She knew the clone troopers could handle any returning Jedi, so she strapped in to her star fighter and left Coruscant's orbit. She set her coordinates for Naboo and jumped to hyperspace.

"I'm coming Anakin and I will soon have everything I want..." Psion said to herself, as she slipped into meditation for the four hour journey.

Obi-Wan and Mace's ships entered the atmosphere on Coruscant and were met with a terrible sight.

"The temple," Obi-Wan whispered in disbelief, as he saw the smoke rising from his home. He had felt the terrible vibrations through the Force. He had felt so many Jedi dying that it had completely overwhelmed him. He knew that Anakin would be feeling the same thing and he needed to get in touch with him as soon as possible. But first, he and Master Windu would have to fight their way inside the temple. The landed on the main temple platform and were immediately attacked by clone troops. Obi-Wan ordered Sabe to stay in his fighter, but she refused and pulled out her blaster. Master Yoda arrived not long after that and with his help, they soon took out all the troopers blocking this particular entrance to the temple.

"Are you sure you want to come in? Some of the things you are going to see will be disturbing," Obi-Wan told her. She squeezed his hands in her own.

"I'm not getting separated from you. I'll be fine and I'm not letting you go through this alone," Sabe insisted. Obi-Wan nodded and ignored the stern gaze that Master Windu gave him. What did their stupid code mean now? They were among the last of the Jedi and now he realized how right Master Qui-Gon had been. The Sith had adapted to change and learned to hide themselves so well, while they had let their old, archaic ways cloud their vision and judgement. How much of this could have been prevented had the rest of the council listened to what he and Master Yoda had tried to tell them. Anakin and Padme followed their hearts and it had served them well. Unfortunately, there was a Sith after them and he knew they had to warn Anakin soon.

"I sense that Darth Psion is no longer on Coruscant," Obi-Wan spoke.

"Correct you would be. Know where she has gone you think you do?" Yoda asked.

"I need to contact Anakin immediately. I think she may be headed for Naboo," Obi-Wan said.

"Contact him from hyperspace you will. Into hiding you and Sabe must go. You as well master Windu. Need time to regroup and plan our attack we do. No good can be done if killed we are," Obi-Wan said.

"Where should we go master?" Obi-Wan asked.

"I believe I can help you with that master Kenobi. I can hide you and Sabe on my planet," Bail Organa said, as he approached them.

"Are you sure Bail? If Palpatine finds out you are helping us, your life would be in danger," Sabe said.

"I am sure milady and he won't find you if you are hidden in the mountain regions of Alderaan. The rebellion is already forming against this new empire and we will need all the Jedi we can find. And you'll need my resources if we are going to find any that escaped the purge," Bail said.

"Most grateful for your help we are Senator Organa," Yoda said.

"The pleasure is mine master Yoda, but we must leave right away. We can contact Anakin and Padme on my ship and warn them about the Sith," Bail said. Obi-Wan nodded.

"What about master Windu?" Sabe asked.

"Senator Mon Mothma is sending for you master Windu. She can accommodate a hiding place on Chandrilla for you. That way, you can also be an integral part of the rebellion. Mace smiled slightly.

"It is nice to know that we still have allies in times like these. I have been wrong about many things and it was too late before I realized it," Mace said.

"Embrace change we must, if to survive we are," Yoda said.

"Where will you go master?" Obi-Wan asked.

"A planet devoid of technology where the Force is strong. Hide my presence from Sidious for the time being I must if our rebellion is to be successful. Go now, you must," Yoda said. The old Jedi master watched with a heavy heart as Obi-Wan and Mace departed. Suddenly, he sensed a very dark presence.

"Hello master Yoda," Sidious cackled.

"Master Sidious, surprised to see you I am not," Yoda said.

"I came to deal with you personally and admire my apprentice's handy work for myself. I must say, she did an excellent job," Sidious said, as he ignited his saber. Yoda ignited his emerald saber with a snap hiss. With a fierce battle cry, Yoda launched at the dark Lord of the Sith...

Padme held Anakin close, as they stood on the very balcony where they were married four years ago. The twins were sleeping in their hover stroller, having fallen asleep on the evening walk down by the waterfalls. It was becoming a family tradition to take a walk after dinner just the four of them. During their walk, Anakin had nearly collapsed, holding his head in agony. When Padme asked him what he was sensing, he said that Jedi were being murdered and he could feel them all dying. Tears had streamed down both their cheeks and the twins began to cry hysterically. Anakin had eased them both into a Force induced sleep so they would not have to experience these feelings, in which they were too young to comprehend.

"Good, you're back. Obi-Wan is trying to contact you both. It seems to be very urgent," Sola said. Anakin and Padme exchanged worried glances. Padme steered the hover stroller inside with Anakin right behind her. They sat down in front of the holo projector and accepted the call.

"Thank the Force you are both there," Obi-Wan said. He looked worried and frazzled.

"Obi-Wan, what's going on. I...I felt them. I felt hundreds of them dying. What's going on?" Anakin asked, in a strained voice. Obi-Wan sighed deeply.

"A few hours ago Masters Gallia, Tiin, Koon, and Mundi stormed into the Chancellor's office, revealing to him that we knew he was the Sith Lord. The tried to place him under arrest and they were killed. Palpatine called an Emergency session of the Senate. He declared that his faithful apprentice had disposed of the separatist leaders. Then, he proceeded to tell them that the Jedi had betrayed the Republic by attempting to assassinate him. He declared that, because of the manipulation by the Jedi that the Republic was no longer functional. He proposed an amendment to dissolve the existing Republic and build a strong, powerful Empire in its place. The amendment passed and Emperor Palpatine ordered that all Jedi are to be hunted down and killed..." Obi-Wan said, despair lacing his voice. Sabe put her arms around his neck from behind. Anakin and Padme gasped in horror.

"Anakin, listen to me very carefully. Naboo is no longer safe. You must get your family and the Naberrie's off Naboo now. She's no longer on Coruscant," Obi-Wan said.

"Who's no longer on Coruscant?" Anakin asked.

"Darth Psion. While Mace and I were on our way back to Coruscant, this "order 66" as Sidious is calling it, was executed. Psion stormed the temple and killed those inside. Some of the escape pods are gone, so we believe a few may have escape, but we have no idea who they were. The clone troopers have been ordered to take out any Jedi on any other systems. We have no idea if any of them survived. Yoda arrived just behind us and we sensed the Psion was no longer on Coruscant. We believe that she is headed for...Naboo. You and your family have to leave and head for the outer rim and you must search for a place where you'll be safe. Sabe, Mace and I have been ordered into hiding as well. Mace has already left for an undisclosed location and Sabe and I are leaving now. We will contact you as soon as we can, but you must leave Naboo. May the Force

be with you Anakin," Obi-Wan said, as his transmission blinked out. Anakin stared blankly. This was a nightmare, but there was no time to lose. He sensed that they didn't have much time...

"Sola, we can't wait until morning to leave. Go home and get everyone into the cruiser. Take Artoo with you. He can begin his search for a suitable planet and then he can relay the coordinates to our ship and we can follow you. She'll be here soon, I can sense it. Go now, we don't have much time," Anakin ordered. Sabe nodded and began running for her speeder.

"Ani, what are we going to do?" Padme asked.

"Threepio, finish getting the ship loaded and run a quick diagnostic scan on the engines. We need to leave as soon as possible," Anakin ordered.

"Yes master Ani," Threepio said faithfully, as he quickly went to work.

Yoda flipped and fought furiously with the dark Lord of the Sith. Sidious cackled, as he met each and everyone of Yoda's parries, thrusts, blade spins. Yoda knew he was in trouble when clone troopers began to rally behind their new master. Yoda spun away from him and began to quickly head for one of the temple ship hangers.

"Do not let him escape!" Sidious ordered. The clone troopers began to follow the little Jedi master, but fortunately, Yoda was far quicker and made it to a ship in a short time. By the time the troopers caught up, he was already taking off. Yoda carefully set his coordinates for Dagobah, as he quietly reflected on everything that had happened.

"Need your council we will master Qui-Gon. Never should I have allowed any of this to happen," Yoda spoke to the Force.

"This is a dark time for the Jedi, master, but we still have the chosen one. It is he and his legacy that will save the galaxy..." a ghostly

voice spoke. Yoda slipped into a deep meditation and called upon the Force to guide and calm him...

Psion arrived on Naboo, as the sun was beginning to set. She landed her ship in the meadow near the lake house. She saw Anakin's droid faithfully loading things into their ship. So, they had been alerted to her arrival. But that didn't matter, as she would still get what she wanted.

Inside the lake house, the hair on the back of Anakin's neck stood up, as he sensed a dark tremor around them.

"No," he whispered.

"We're ready Ani," Padme said, as she held Luke and Dorme held Leia. They had told Dorme and Typho that they didn't have to leave Naboo if they didn't want to. But both had responded that they would go wherever the Skywalkers did if they'd allow it. Anakin and Padme had smiled in agreement, both glad that their friends, who for a while were the only ones that knew of their marriage, were going with them.

"What's wrong Ani?" Padme asked.

"She's here. Get them in the ship. If I'm not back in 20 minutes get Padme and the twins off Naboo," Anakin ordered Typho.

"No Anakin, I'm not leaving without you!" Padme cried.

"Please angel, I can't allow any harm to come to you or the twins. If she defeats me, then she'll come after you. Wait twenty minutes and then leave," Anakin repeated, as he drew his saber and walked out onto the balcony. Psion stared up at him from the sandy beach, a sadistic and evil grin painted on her face. Using the Force, Anakin jumped over the balcony and onto the sand below.

"You leave them out of this," Anakin said, referring to his family.

"Don't worry Anakin, I have nointention of killing you. However, I can say the same about your wife. With a snap hiss, Anakin and Psion ignited their sabers.

"You stay away from her!" Anakin said, as his saber clashed with Psion's. His muscles screamed in protest at the exertion, as they were still raw from their fight only a day ago. But he ignored them and used the Force to help him push the pain down deep. On the sandy beaches of Naboo, he and Psion fought furiously, she Nubian sun dipped low in the sky...

A New Hope

Disclaimer: The sand box is George's, I just play here cause it's fun.

A Matter of Trust

Chapter 17: A New Hope

Psion turned his saber aside and hopped on a nearby water speeder and headed off over the lake. Anakin jumped on the one they always used to travel back to Theed or to the island and followed her. Psion smirked evilly and smashed her speeder into Anakin's. Then, she flipped on to his speeder. Anakin flipped on the auto pilot and clashed his saber with hers. The water of the ocean sprayed up around them and began to soak them both.

"If you willingly come with me, I just might let your wife live. I'll even let you bring your son, for he will make a strong apprentice someday," Psion said. Anakin seethed at her.

"You will not take me from them and you will not harm them!" Anakin yelled back, as their sabers met furiously. Using the Force, Psion made the speeder swerve harshly. Anakin was thrown off balance and into the water. Underwater, Anakin scrambled for his breathing apparatus on his utility belt. He grabbed it quickly and placed it in his mouth. Psion was right in after him and she was also using a breathing apparatus. Anakin looked around and swam toward a nearby cavern. It looked like something the Gungans used and he quickly swam in with Psion right behind him. He swam inside the cavern and found that there was a bubble air around the inside of the cavern and it was not underwater. He pulled himself up onto the land. Psion was right behind him and their sabers ignited again, each with a snap hiss.

"Like the other Jedi that have fallen to me, so will you, for you are no match for the powers of the dark side," Psion said.

"Your overconfidence is your weakness and you underestimate the power of love. That will be your downfall, I promise you that," Anakin replied, as he circled her. With a fierce battle cry, Psion launched at him again and they exchanged saber blows furiously.

Obi-Wan Kenobi received clearance to land on Naboo. He knew that he was directly disobeying master Yoda, but he had a terrible feeling that Anakin and Padme had not made it off Naboo before Psion's arrival. He had convinced Sabe to stay on Alderaan with no small amount of effort. He promised her that he would return, but he would not leave his brother to the mercy of a Sith Lord that wanted him for her own and wanted nothing more than to murder his brother's wife. He landed the fighter in the meadow near the lake house and he could see Padme running to him frantically.

"Obi-Wan!" she cried. He hopped down from his fighter and grasped her arms, as she caught her breath. Tears were rolling down her beautiful face.

"Ani and Psion were on a water speeder in the middle of the lake. It swerved and Ani fell in. Psion went...after him, but they...haven't resurfaced," Padme cried.

"Shh...you need to calm down Padme. I'm sure Anakin had his breathing apparatus with him. I'll find him, don't worry. Go back to the ship with the twins and wait for us," Obi-Wan said.

"I'm going with you," Padme insisted.

"No Padme, go back to the ship," Obi-Wan ordered.

"Damn it Obi-Wan! I'm going after my husband and you can't stop me!" Padme yelled, as she headed for the nearby underwater sub ship. Obi-Wan shed his cloak and ran after her.

"Blasted stubborn woman," Obi-Wan muttered, understanding now what Anakin had been up against when they had decided to come to

Geonosis to rescue him. He had scolded Anakin heavily for disobeying orders, but now he realized Anakin never stood a chance against Padme. He hopped in the driver's seat, making Padme sit in the passenger seat.

"I'll drive, you're as crazy as your husband is behind the wheel," Obi-Wan said. Padme smirked at him, as he fired up the engines.

He turned on the headlights and plunged the ship into the depths of the Nabooan ocean, his senses guiding him to his former padawan.

Anakin's muscles burned in protest, as he brought his saber up in an arc with hers.

"You're exhausted Anakin. You're not completely recovered from yesterday. I can sense the pain in the light saber burn on your side. Come with me peacefully, I really don't want to hurt you," Psion said.

"That's really nice of you, but I'm afraid I'll have to pass on your offer," Anakin replied sarcastically. Psion snarled, not amused. She pushed him back and shot Force lightning at him. Anakin brought his saber up to catch it. The blue lightning stuck Anakin's saber and he held the stream steady.

"You throw an awful lot of Force lightning around. Let's see how you like it," Anakin yelled, as he drew his saber back and thrust the lightning back at her. She stopped shooting her lightning and dodged out of the way. The lightning struck the ceiling of the cavern and rock began to crumble around them.

"That was a big mistake Anakin," Psion growled.

"You're the one shooting the Force lightning," Anakin retorted. Psion used the Force to pick up a rather large boulder and sent it barreling toward Anakin. Anakin outstretched his palms and stopped the oncoming boulder with the Force. The boulder hovered in the air, as

Jedi and Sith fought for control over the object. Anakin won out, as he pushed the boulder aside and into a nearby wall. Psion smirked.

"You are powerful Anakin, I can see why my master was once interested in making you his apprentice," Psion said.

"Your master is murdering bastard! Because of him, countless Jedi lost their lives today, even children! I promise as long as there is breath in my body, that you and your master will never get near my wife and children!" Anakin said fiercely, as their sabers clashed again. Psion was growing tired of the delay, so she shot lightning at him again. Anakin blocked it again, but Psion was relentless this time. The lightning bypassed Anakin's saber, striking his hand. This caused him to drop his saber and it shut itself off as it clattered the ground. Psion then shot lightning into Anakin's abdomen, causing him to double over. Anakin screamed, as the pain was excruciating. He writhed on the ground in pain still, even after the lightning ceased. Psion approached him quickly and drew a syringe from her cloak. She jammed into the back of his neck. He cried out in pain, as the liquid burned going in. Anakin began to feel the effects of the drug right away, as he felt himself being cut off from the Force. He began to feel very groggy and he realized whatever else was in the drug was designed to lower his resistance and inhibition. The other part of the drug was obviously a highly potent ysalamiri serum.

"You're mine Anakin Skywalker," Psion said.

Suddenly, Obi-Wan felt Anakin's signature disappear in the Force.

"Ysalamiri serum," Obi-Wan muttered.

"What?" Padme asked.

"I think Psion has managed to administer the ysalamiri serum to Anakin. Padme looked horrified.

Fortunately, Obi-Wan was near the cave where he felt Anakin's force signature. He steered the sub in and arrived just in time to see Psion trying to lift a very drugged Anakin into the other sub.

"You won't interfere with my plans this time Kenobi. Anakin is mine. Thank you though for bringing the Senator right to me so I can kill her, Psion said.

"Padme?" Anakin questioned, looking around for her.

"I'm here Ani," Padme called.

"Sorry Senator, but your *Ani* is mine now," Psion replied.

"Oh I don't think so," Obi-Wan said.

Psion left Anakin leaning against her ship, as she drew her saber to go after Obi-Wan. As she and Obi-Wan fought, Padme slipped over to Anakin. She brushed the damp hair from his eyes.

"Ani, talk to me baby, please," Padme said, as she held his face in her hands. He opened his eyes and she could see that they were glassy.

"Oh Ani, what did she give you?" Padme asked.

"Padme, leave me. You...you have to get off Naboo...with the twins," Anakin mumbled.

"I'm not leaving without you Anakin, never ever," she replied. Padme looked over, only to see Psion sweep Obi-Wan's feet out from under him with a drop spin kick. She picked up Anakin's light saber and rolled it in her hand. She wasn't very skilled with it, but Anakin had taught her enough in the last six months to protect herself and the children if she ever needed to. Psion was too busy hovering over Obi-Wan, ready to plunged her saber through his heart to notice the snap hiss of Anakin's saber. Just as she was about to drive the saber through the Jedi master, Padme swiped Anakin's saber at the Sith's

face. Psion sidestepped her just in time, but the saber grazed her cheek, painfully burning her. She cried out in pain, as she clutched the side of her face. The Sith felt her wound and realized how deep it was, assuring her that it would scar.

"YOU! I HATE YOU! I'll KILL YOU!" Psion screamed, losing control of her anger. Anakin opened his eyes, hearing Psion's hateful words toward Padme. He stumbled up and tried to reach her. Psion outstretched her fingers, ready to pour Force lightning into Padme's body. Padme clenched her eyes shut and waited for the pain to come. But what she felt was Anakin's arms around her, as he stepped in front of the attack, taking the brunt of the Force lightning in his back.

"ANAKIN!" Obi-Wan cried, as his former apprentice cried out in immense agony.

"ANI!" Padme cried, as they fell to the ground together in each other's arms.

"I'll finish you off after I deal with Kenobi," Psion promised, as she turned back to Obi-Wan.

She shot Force lightning at him, but Obi-Wan was prepared. Using the Force, he lifted a large boulder that blocked the Force lightning and sent it back at her. She was hit with her own attack and then the large boulder, knocking her unconscious. He knew she wouldn't be out for long, but long enough to get Anakin and Padme off the planet. He threw Anakin over his shoulder and put him in the passenger seat of the sub, while Padme climbed in beside him.

"Master?" Anakin groggily opened his eyes.

"It's all right Anakin, we're getting you out of here," Obi-Wan said.

"Padme," Anakin muttered.

"I'm here my love," Padme's voice soothed him and her touch to his cheek somehow seemed to ease the residual pain coursing through his body.

"I took care of her for time being. You'll be safely away in hyperspace before she catches up," Obi-Wan said, as he took control of the ship and ascended to the surface.

Obi-Wan carried Anakin onto Padme ship and to the med bay. He carefully laid him on the table.

"Dorme and I will treat him Obi-Wan. I can't thank you enough for coming, but you have to get off Naboo before she wakes up," Padme said.

"I will Padme, make sure Typho takes off right away. I'll be in contact with you soon to see how Anakin is doing," Obi-Wan said, as he hugged her quickly.

"I wish it didn't have to be like this," Padme said.

"We're family Padme and it won't always be like this. We won't hide forever, only until it's time to take action. May the Force be with you all," Obi-Wan said, as he quickly departed.

"You too Obi-Wan," Padme replied, as she and Dorme strapped Anakin in and then themselves, as they took off. Once they were safely in hyperspace, Padme and Dorme began to tend to Anakin.

"Ani, can you hear me?" Padme asked.

"Padme?" he asked.

"I'm here baby. Dorme is going to take a blood sample so we can see what she injected you with so we can treat you," Padme said. Anakin nodded, as Dorme took the blood sample and ran it through the scanner. After a few moments, the results came back. Padme

lazily ran her fingers through his hair, comforting him while he slept off the effects of the drug and the Force lightning.

"What are the results?" Padme asked.

"The majority of the drug was ysalamiri, which is why Anakin can't feel the Force. The other remnants are from a drug called Serelium." Dorme said.

"What's Serelium?" Padme asked.

"It's an illegal Corellian drug that lowers a person's inhibition and resistance," Dorme said.

"So, he would have been putty in her hands," Padme said, gritting her teeth in anger toward the Sith.

"I'm afraid so. She could have told him that she was you and he wouldn't have known the difference until the drug wore off," Dorme replied. Padme shook her head angrily.

"So in other words, she wanted nothing more than to get him in her bed!" Padme said angrily.

"I'm afraid so milady, but the important thing is that she didn't succeed," Dorme reminded her. Padme sighed deeply and nodded, before moving back to Anakin's side.

"He'll be fine Padme. I've just given him a sedative so he can sleep it all off. He'll be up and around in a few days, I promise," Dorme assured her. Padme smiled, as they heard a knock at the med bay door.

"Come in Captain," Padme replied.

"How is he doing?" Typho asked.

"He'll be okay, he just needs a lot of rest," Padme smiled. Typho smiled back.

"That's good news. Artoo relayed your parent's hyperspace trajectory before we took off. We're only a few hours behind them. Artoo is scanning for a suitable planet for us in the outer rim and it could be days before he finds anything. Fortunately, we have enough food stores on board to last us weeks," Typho informed her.

"Good, I hope he finds something soon," Padme said.

"Me too milady," Typho replied.

Obi-Wan Kenobi secretly arrived at he and Sabe's new home in the Alderaan mountains several hours later. The cabin was small and cozy with modest furniture and all the necessities for living.

"Obi-Wan, thank the Force you're all right!" Sabe cried, as she threw her arms around him. Obi-Wan hugged her tightly and pressed his lips to hers in a passionate kiss.

"Are Anakin and Padme okay?" she asked. Obi-Wan nodded.

"It's a long story, but yes, they made it off Naboo," Obi-Wan replied. Sabe and Obi-Wan sat down together, holding each other close as they talked about everything that had happened.

"Skywalker has escaped?" Sidious asked.

"I'm afraid so my master. I had him and then Kenobi and the Senator interfered again," Psion replied angrily.

"You will find them and have your revenge. The important thing is that our plans have worked. We have ended the war and our new Empire will create a stable environment for everyone," Sidious said.

"Yes master and those who oppose us shall fall. Construction on the death star has already begun my master," Psion said.

"Very good my young apprentice. If you serve me well, then you will have everything you want," Sidious said, as they stood on the bridge of Sidious' new Imperial cruiser. Psion touched the painful wound on her face, which had already began to scar over. The scar stretched from her cheekbone to her chin. The hate and anger toward Padme Skywalker burned brightly like the twin suns of Tatooine. Sidious smiled evilly, as he felt the depths of her hate and anger.

Nearly a week had passed since they left Naboo. Anakin had been out of it for about three days thanks to the very potent drug. He finally began to regain the feeling of the Force around him on the fourth day. But Padme had been insistent that he take it easy, due to the fact that he was still sore from the impact of the Force lightning. Though they were all going a little bit stir crazy on the ship, he had enjoyed the quiet time with his family. He hoped that Artoo soon found them a suitable planet for them to live on, for they all missed fresh air. Anakin went up to the cockpit to check Artoo's progress.

"Hey Artoo, how goes the search?" Anakin asked. Artoo beaped enthusiastically.

"You think you found a place?" Anakin asked in a hopeful tone. Artoo booped affirmatively and brought the schematics of the planet he was talking about onto the screen in front of Anakin.

"Andea. I've never even heard of it, so it's likely that not many other people have either," Anakin said. Artoo beeped in agreement.

"Wow Artoo, you've done an excellent job. The planet appears to be similar in climate and texture to Naboo. Lots of bodies of water, which Padme will love. No sand for miles and miles, which I love," Anakin chuckled. Artoo chirped in what Anakin had come to think of as Artoo's own electronic chuckle.

"Ani, did Artoo find something?" Padme asked, as she came into the cockpit.

"He sure did angel, take a look at this planet," Anakin said, as he pulled her down into his lap. Padme's eyes looked over the information and she smiled.

"Oh it sounds perfect Ani," she said.

"Good, because we're only about an hour away," Anakin replied, as he kissed her.

"I'll go tell everyone and get the twins ready!" Padme said with excitement. She kissed him quickly, as she bounced up and bounded out of the cockpit. Anakin laughed, as he watched her go and he could hear beautiful voice tell Typho and Dorme the good news.

The planet Andea was a beautiful place with very friendly people. It was like an undiscovered jewel in the outer rim. The people liked it that way and the Skywalker family had to meet with the queen herself before they were given the permission to settle on the planet. They met with the queen in Andea city, the capital, soon after they were allowed to land at a local port. They explained to the queen that they sought a peaceful place to raise their children. When they stated their names, the queen immediately recognized them, for they had the holonet broadcasts even out this far in the outer rim. They had been a little nervous by that at first, but the queen assured them that it would be unlikely that any of the citizens would recognize them, as most paid little attention to the holonet and cared little for what went on in the Republic. The kind queen welcomed the former Senator of the Republic and former Jedi Knight to her planet. For the next few days, Dorme and Typho stayed with the twins, while Anakin and Padme searched for a place to settle. Money really wasn't a worry for them, seeing as Padme was quite independently wealthy being that she was a Senator in the former Republic. Being fond of water, Anakin and Padme decided on a lake house since they missed their home on Naboo so much. The place was near the Andean ocean and the massive Andean falls that roared through the valley of their new home. They were not far outside the capital city at

all, their house residing in a village suburb of the capital. Ruwee, Jobal, Sola and Darred found a spacious home in a meadow about a mile away from Anakin and Padme's place. Over the next few days, the two families settled into their new homes and their new lives.

Anakin, Padme, Dorme and Typho finished moving the last of their things into their new home. Dorme and Typho had just gone to bed, while Anakin and Padme were putting the twins to bed. Anakin smiled, as he listened to Padme sing the twins to sleep from the doorway. He came up behind her and peered down into their cribs, while wrapping his arms around her waist. They kissed their little angels goodnight and went to their new bedroom. Both knew that the road ahead of them would not be easy, but they took comfort in the fact that they walk it together. Padme feathered her fingers along her firmly muscled chest. He pulled her close and kissed her deeply, slowly moving his lips down to the nape of her neck. They moved to the bed and collapsed on it together.

"I love you Padme and I promise everything will turn out okay. We just have to trust in our love and in the Force," Anakin told her, as he kissed her deeply and passionately. She looked up at him, longing and desire etched over her features.

"I know Ani. I'm never scared when you're near, because I know that everything will be all right as long as we're together," Padme replied, as she pulled him down, slanting her mouth over his.

"I'll love you forever angel," Anakin said breathlessly.

"And I you, Ani," Padme replied, as they let the passion and love that flowed so effortlessly between them take over. They both knew things could have turned out much, much worse. They didn't know how, but the Force was telling them that by following their hearts, they had done the right thing. They knew that together, there was nothing that they couldn't accomplish. Together, the Skywalker's would free the galaxy from it's oppression.

The End

To be continued in A Matter of Hope...the sequel to A Matter of Trust. Coming soon!